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# FRENCH & ENGLISH

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# FRENCH & ENGLISH

## A Comparison

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BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON

AUTHOR OF 'THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE,' ETC.

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# ADVERTISEMENT

In the years 1886 and 1887 the author contributed a series of seven articles to the *Atlantic Monthly*, which bore the title of the present volume, and are in great part absorbed in it. The book, however, is essentially new, as it contains much more matter than the articles, and the chapters are either hitherto unpublished or re-written in a less desultory order.

This work is not intended to be historical. It only professes to compare the French and English of the second half of the nineteenth century.

# PREFACE

It may be taken as typical of the author's intentions that he has felt uncertain which of the two nationalities he would put first in the title, and that the question has been decided by a mere consideration of euphony. If the reader cares to try the experiment of saying "English and French," and "French and English" afterwards, he will find that the latter glides the more glibly from the tongue. There is a tonic accent at the beginning of the word "English" and a dying away at the end of it which are very convenient in the last word of a title. "French," on the other hand, comes to a dead stop, in a manner too abrupt to be agreeable.

The supercilious critic will say that I am making overmuch of a small matter, but he may allow me to explain why I put the Frenchmen first, lest I be accused of a lack of patriotism. This book has not, however, been written from a patriotic point of view; it is not simply an exposition of the follies and sins of another nation for the comparative glorification of my own, neither is it an example of what Herbert Spencer has aptly called "anti-patriotism," which is the systematic setting down of one's own country-

men by a comparison with the superior qualities of the foreigner.

I should like to write with complete impartiality, if it were possible. I have at least written with the most sincere desire to be impartial, and that perhaps at the cost of some popularity in England, for certain English critics have told me that impartiality is not patriotic, and others have informed me of what I did not know before, namely, that I prefer the French to my own countrymen.

It seems to me that the best patriotism does not consist in speaking evil of another country, but in endeavouring to serve one's own. There are many kinds of service. That of a writer is above all things to tell the truth and not to deceive his countrymen even when they wish to be deceived. If he fails in veracity he is guilty of a kind of treachery to his own country by giving it erroneous ideas or fallacious information. Such treachery may become serious when the subject of the volume is international. When public writers are patriotic in the old narrow and perverse meaning of the term, that is to say, when they are full of gall and injustice, when they systematically treat the foreigner as a being who has neither rights, nor merits, nor feelings, then, whether intentionally or not, they are urging their own nation on the path that leads to war. When they endeavour to write truly and justly about the foreigner, with a due consideration for his different position and a fair recognition of his rights and feelings, then they are favouring the growth of a conciliatory temper which, when a difficulty arises, will tend

to mutual concession and to the preservation of peace. Is it better or worse for England that she should maintain peaceful relations with her nearest neighbour, with that nation which, along with herself, has done most for liberty and light? That question may be answered by the experience of seventy years.

I have no illusions about friendship between nations. There will never be any firm friendship between England and France, and a momentary attachment would only cause me anxiety on account of the inevitable reaction. All I hope for and all that seems to me really desirable is simply mutual consideration. *That* is possible, *that* is attainable; in the higher minds of both countries (with a few exceptions) it exists already. If it existed generally in the people it would be enough to prevent bloodshed. Any difficulty that arose between the two countries would be met in a rational temper and probably overcome without leaving rancour behind it. This has actually been done on one or two recent occasions with complete success, a result due to the high patriotism of the statesmen on both sides. A lower and more vulgar patriotism would have aroused the passion of *chauvinisme* which puts an end to all justice and reason.

Whatever the spirit of justice may lead to in the correspondence of statesmen, it is a sad hindrance to effects in literature. I am fully aware of this, and know that, without justice, a more dashing and brilliant book might easily have been written. *Just* writing does not amuse, but malevolence may be made extremely enter-

taining. What is less obvious is that justice often puts her veto on those fine effects of simulated indignation which the literary advocate knows to be of such great professional utility. It is a fine thing to have an opportunity for condemning a whole nation in one terribly comprehensive sentence. The literary moralist puts on his most dignified manner when he can deplore the wickedness of thirty millions of human beings. It is ennobling to feel yourself better and greater than thirty millions, and the reader, too, has a fine sense of superiority in being encouraged to look down upon such a multitude. Justice comes in and says, "But there are exceptions and they ought not to be passed over." "That may be," replies the Genius of Brilliant Literature, "but if I stop to consider these I shall lose all breadth of effect. Lights will creep into my black shadows and I shall no longer appal with gloom. I want the most telling oppositions. The interests of art take precedence over commonplace veracity."

The foreigner may be effectually dealt with in one of two ways. He may be made to appear either ridiculous or wicked. The satire may be humorous, or it may be bitter and severe. The French, with their lighter temperament, take pleasure in making the Englishmen absurd. The English, on their part, though by no means refusing themselves the satisfaction of laughing at their neighbours, are not disinclined to assume a loftier tone. It is not so much what is obviously ridiculous in French people that repels as that which cannot be described without a graver reprobation.

And yet, delightful as may be the pleasures of malice and uncharitableness, they must always be alloyed by the secret misgiving that the foreigner may possibly, in reality, not be quite so faulty as we describe him and as we wish him to be. But the pleasure of knowing the truth for its own sake, when there is no malice, is a satisfaction without any other alloy than the regret that men should be no better than they are.

One of my objects in this book has been to show real resemblances under an appearance of diversity. Not only do nations deceive themselves by names, but they seem anxious to deceive themselves and unwilling to be undeceived. For example, in the matter of Government, there is the deceptive use of the words "Monarchy" and "Republic." When we are told, for the sake of contrast, that England is a Monarchy and France a Republic, it is impossible, of course, to deny that the statement is nominally accurate, but it conveys, and is disingenuously intended to convey, an idea of opposition that does not correspond with the reality. The truth is that both countries have essentially the same system of Government. In both we find a predominant Legislative Chamber, with a Cabinet responsible to that Chamber, and existing by no other tenure than the support of a precarious majority. The Chamber in both countries is elected by the people, with this difference, that in France the suffrage is universal and in England very nearly universal. In short, the degree of difference that there is does not justify the use of terms which would be accurate if applied to countries

so politically opposite as Russia and the United States. Again, in the matter of religion, to say that France is "Catholic" and England "Protestant" conveys a far stronger idea of difference than that which would answer to the true state of the case. In each country we find a dominant Orthodoxy, the Church of the aristocracy, with its hierarchy of prelates and other dignitaries; and under the shadow of the Orthodoxy, like little trees under a big one, we find minor Protestant sects that have no prelates, and also tolerated Jews and unbelievers. Stated in this way the real similarity of the two cases becomes much more apparent, the most important difference (usually passed over in silence) being that co-establishment exists in France for two Protestant sects and for the Jews, whilst it does not exist in England.

It is an obstacle to accurate thinking when differences are made to appear greater than they are by the use of misleading language.[1] France and England are, no doubt, very different, as two entirely independent nations are sure to be, especially when there is a marked diversity of race, but the distance between them is perpetually varying. I hope to show in this volume how they approach to and recede from each other. The present tendency is

[1] Here is an instance of misleading by mistranslation. The English newspapers speak of Parisian "Communists" when they ought to say Communards. A Communist is a Socialist of a particular kind, who wants to have goods in common after the fashion of the early Christians. A Communard is a person who wishes for an extreme development of local government. He thinks that the Commune (something like a township) ought to have more autonomy —be more independent of the State. M. Charles Beslay, an old

strongly towards likeness, as, for example, in the adoption by the English of the closure and county councils, which are both French institutions; and it might safely be predicted that the French and English peoples will be more like each other in the future than they are now. Democracy in politics and the recognition of complete liberty of conscience, both positive and negative, in religion, will be common to both countries. Even in matters of custom there is a perceptible approach, not to identity, but to a nearer degree of similarity. The chauvinist spirit in both countries recognises this unwillingly. A nobler patriotism may see in it some ground of hope for a better international understanding.

As it is unpleasant for an author to see his opinions misrepresented, I may be permitted to say that in politics I am a pure "Opportunist," believing that the best Government is that which is best suited to the *present* condition of a nation, though another might be ideally superior. When a country is left to itself a natural law produces the sort of Government which answers for the time. I look upon all Governments whatever as merely temporary and provisional expedients, usually of an un-

friend of mine, became a Communard and was Governor of the Bank of France under the Commune. He was a most upright and honourable gentleman, and so far from being a Communist that he defended the treasure of the Bank of France throughout the civil war of 1871, and afterwards handed it over intact to the proper authorities. I do not accuse English journalists of intentional dishonesty in this case; there is no English equivalent for *Communard*, the nearest English rendering would be *township home-rule-man*.

satisfactory character, their very imperfection being a sort of quality, as it reconciles men to the inevitable change. To make a comparison far more sublime than our poorly-contrived political systems deserve, they are moving like the sun with all his *cortége* of planets towards a goal that is utterly unknown. Or it is possible that there may be no goal whatever before us, but only unending motion. The experimental temper of our own age is preparing, almost unconsciously, for an unseen and unimaginable future. It is our vain desire to penetrate the secret of that future that makes all our experiments so interesting to us. France has been the great experimental laboratory during the last hundred years, but England is now almost equally venturesome, and is likely, before long, to become the more interesting nation of the two.

I believe Parliamentary Government to be the only system possible and practicable in England and France at the present day. I believe this without illusion and without enthusiasm. The parliamentary system is so imperfect that it works slowly and clumsily in England, whilst in France it can hardly be made to work at all. With two parties the prize of succession is offered to the most eloquent fault-finder, with three a Cabinet has not vitality enough for bare existence. At the present moment the English Parliament inspires but little respect and the French no respect whatever. Still we are parliamentarians, not for the love of long speeches in the House, but from a desire to preserve popular liberty outside of it. The distinction here between England and France is that in France

every parliamentarian is of necessity a republican, a freely-elected parliament being incompatible with monarchy in that country, whereas in England Queen Victoria, unlike her predecessor Charles I., has made it possible for her subjects to be parliamentarians and royalists at the same time.

In the variety of national and religious antipathies we sometimes meet with strange anomalies. Whenever there is any conflict between French Catholics and French Freethinkers the sympathy of all but a very few English people is assured to the Catholics beforehand, without any examination into the merits of the case, and the case itself is likely to be stated in England in such a manner as to command sympathy for the Catholics. This is remarkable in a country which is, on the whole, Protestant, as the very existence of the French Protestants (in themselves a defenceless minority) is due to the protection of the Freethinkers. Without that strictly neutral protection Protestant worship would no more be tolerated in France than it was in the city of Rome when the Popes had authority there. I may also remind the English reader that if genuine Catholics were to become masters of England all Protestant places of worship would be shut up, and the Anglican sovereign would have the alternative of Henri IV, whilst the heaviest political and municipal disabilities would weigh upon all who did not go to confession and hear mass. On the other hand, if Freethinkers, such as the present generation of French politicians, were masters of England, the worst evil to be apprehended

would be the impartial treatment of all religions, either by co-establishment as in France, or by disestablishment as in Ireland. The bishops might be dismissed from the House of Lords, but the bishops and clergy of all faiths would be eligible for the House of Commons, as they are for the Chamber of Deputies.

It is now quite a commonly-received opinion in England that religion is "odiously and senselessly persecuted" in France, but nothing is said against the Italian Government for its treatment of the monastic orders. Neither does it occur to English writers that this is a case of a mote in the neighbour's eye and a beam in one's own. The Catholic Church has been robbed and pillaged by the French secular power, which allows her nearly two millions sterling a year in compensation, and keeps the diocesan edifices in excellent repair. The Catholic Church has been robbed and pillaged by the English secular power, which repairs none of her buildings and allows her nothing a year in compensation. In France the Jewish and Dissenting clergy are paid by the "persecuting" State, in England they get nothing from the State. Catholic street processions are forbidden in many of the French towns; in England they are tolerated in none. In France a Catholic may be the head of the State; in England he is excluded from that position by law. The French Government maintains diplomatic relations with the Holy See; a Nuncio is not received at the Court of St. James's.

The French Government is described as persecuting

and tyrannical because it has sent pretenders into exile after tolerating them for sixteen years. The English Government never tolerated pretenders at all, but kept them in exile from first to last—the *last* being their final extinction on foreign soil.

Another very curious and unfortunate anomaly is the instinctive opposition of French Republicans to England. It exists in degrees exactly proportioned to the degree of democratic passion in the Frenchman. When he is a moderate Republican he dislikes England moderately, a strong Republican usually hates her, and a radical Republican detests her. These feelings are quite outside of the domain of reason. England is nominally monarchical, it is true, but in reality, as every intelligent Frenchman ought to know, she has set the example of free institutions.

An hypothesis that may explain such anomalies as these, is that the ancient national antipathy which our fathers expressed in bloodshed has now, in each nation, taken the form of jealousy of the other's progress, so that although each enjoys freedom for herself she can never quite approve of it in her neighbour. There is also the well-known dislike to neutrals which in times of bitter contention intensifies itself into a hatred even stronger than the hatred of the enemy. The French Freethinker is a neutral between hostile religions, and the English lover of political liberty is regarded as a sort of neutral by Frenchmen, since he has neither the virulence of the *intransigeant* nor the vindictiveness of the *réactionnaire*.

In concluding this Preface I wish to say a few words about nationality in ideas.

The *purity* of nationality in a man's ideas is only compatible with pure ignorance. An English agricultural labourer may be purely English. The gentleman's son who learns Latin and Greek becomes partly latinised and partly hellenised; if he learns to speak French at all well he becomes, so far, gallicised. To preserve the pure English quality you must exclude everything that is not English from education. You must exclude even the natural sciences and the fine arts, as they have been built up with the aid of foreigners and constantly lead to the study of foreign works. These things do not belong to a nation but to the civilised world, and England, as Rebecca said in *Ivanhoe*, is not the world. Her men of science quote foreign authorities continually, her painters and musicians are nourished, from their earliest youth, on continental genius.

But although it is impossible for an educated man to preserve the *purity* of his mental nationality, that is, its exclusive and insular character, although it is impossible for him to dwell in English ideas only when foreign ideas are equally accessible to him, the fact remains that the educated mind still includes far more of what is English than the uneducated one. The man who is called "half a foreigner" because he knows a foreign language may be more largely English than his critic. A rich man may hold foreign securities and yet, at the same time, have larger English investments than his poorer neighbour.

Even with regard to affection, there are Englishmen who love Italy far more passionately than I have ever loved France, yet they love England as if they had never quitted their native parish.

The *Saturday Review* was once good enough to say that I am "courteously careful not to offend." It is satisfactory to be told that one has nice literary manners, but I have never consciously studied the art of avoiding offence, and in a book like this it does not seem possible to avoid it. People are more sensitive for their nation than they are even for themselves. They resent the simplest truths, though stated quite without malice, if they appear to be in the least unfavourable. One evening, at Victor Hugo's house in Paris, a few of his friends met, and the conversation turned by accident on a book of mine, *Round my House*, then recently published. Gambetta, who was present, was in a mood of protestation because I had said that the French peasants were ignorant, and Victor Hugo was inclined to take their part. The sentiment of patriotism was very ardent and sensitive in Gambetta, so he could not allow a foreigner to say anything that seemed unfavourable to France. Yet the French themselves have shown that they were aware of the ignorance prevalent in their own country by their praiseworthy efforts to remedy it.

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# PART I

## EDUCATION

# CHAPTER I

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In England there is not much physical education of a formal and methodical nature; the English are not remarkable for a love of gymnastic exercises, and they seldom train or develop the body scientifically except when they prepare themselves for boat races. In saying this I leave out of consideration the small class of professional athletes, which is not numerous enough to affect the nation generally. It has been said, and by a French author, that of all modern races the English come nearest, in the physical life, to the existence of the ancient Greeks. The difference, however, between the modern English and the Greeks of classic antiquity is mainly in this, that the Greeks were a systematically trained people and the English are not.

Not much formal Physical Training in England.

English and Greeks.

Still, the English are a remarkably active people, and they owe their activity chiefly to a love of rural amusements and of the open air. Thus, in an informal manner, they get a kind of unscientific training which is of immense advantage to their health and vigour. A criticism of this irregular training (which is not mine, as

Activity of the English.

Their irregular Training.

it comes from a scientific gymnast) affirms that it develops the legs better than the arms and chest, and that although it increases strength it does not much cultivate suppleness. According to scientific opinion, more might be made of the English people if they took as much interest in gymnastic training as they do in their active amusements. The advantage of these amusements is that they divert the mind, and so in turn have a healthy influence on the body, independently of muscular exertion.

Advantage of Amusements.

There are exceptions to the usual English indifference about gymnastics, and it may happen that the lover of gymnastics cares less than others for the usual English sports. This was the case with Professor Clifford. His biographer says: "At school he showed little taste for the ordinary games, but made himself proficient in gymnastics; a pursuit which at Cambridge he carried out, in fellowship with a few like-minded companions,[1] not only into the performance of the most difficult feats habitual to the gymnasium, but into the invention of other new and adventurous ones. His accomplishments of this kind were the only ones in which he ever manifested pride."

Professor Clifford.

Many distinguished Englishmen have had some favourite physical amusement that we associate with their names. It is almost a part of an Englishman's nature to select a physical pursuit and make it especially his own. His countrymen like him the better for having a taste of this kind. Mr. Gladstone's practised skill in tree-felling is a help to his popularity. The readers of Wordsworth, Scott, and Byron, all remember that the

Choice of Physical Pursuits.

Gladstone.

Wordsworth. Scott. Byron.

[1] Observe that the like-minded companions were "few."

first was a pedestrian, the second a keen sportsman, and the third the best swimmer of his time. The readers of Keats are sorry for the ill-health that spoiled the latter years of his short life, but they remember with satisfaction that the ethereal poet was once muscular enough to administer "a severe drubbing to a butcher whom he caught beating a little boy, to the enthusiastic admiration of a crowd of bystanders." Shelley's name is associated for ever with his love of boating and its disastrous ending. In our own day, when we learn something about the private life of our celebrated contemporaries, we have a satisfaction in knowing that they enjoy some physical recreation, as, for example, that Tyndall is a mountaineer, Millais a grouse-shooter, John Bright a salmon-fisher; and it is characteristic of the inveteracy of English physical habits that Mr. Fawcett should have gone on riding and skating after he was blind, and that Anthony Trollope was still passionately fond of fox-hunting when he was old and heavy and could hardly see. The English have such a respect for physical energy that they still remember with pleasure how Palmerston hunted in his old age, and how, almost to the last, he would go down to Epsom on horseback. There was a little difficulty about getting him into the saddle, but, once there, he was safe till the end of his journey.

Keats. Shelley. Tyndall. Millais. Bright. Trollope. Palmerston.

Cricket and boating are the trainers of English youth, and foreigners, when they visit Eton, are astonished at the important place assigned to these two pursuits. It is always amusing to an Englishman to read the descriptions of the national game by which French writers attempt (of course without success) to make it intelligible to their countrymen. These descriptions are generally erroneous,

Cricket and Boating.

occasionally correct, but invariably as much from the outside as if the writer were describing the gambols of strange animals. Whilst English and French have billiards and many other games in common, cricket remains exclusively and peculiarly English. It cannot be acclimatised in France. I believe that some feeble attempts have been made, but without result. The game could not be played in the gravelled courts of French *lycées*, under a hundred windows, but this difficulty would be overcome if there were any natural genius for cricket in the French race. A few of the *lycées* are in large towns, and far from possible cricket fields; the majority are in small towns, not a mile from pasture and meadow. The French seem to believe that all English youths delight in the national game, but that is a foreigner's generalisation. Some English boys dislike it, and play only to please others, or because it is the fashion amongst boys. However, most English boys have gone through the training of cricket, though many give it up when they abandon Latin. It is useful because it does not exercise the legs only, like walking, or the arms and chest only, like rowing, but all the body.

Cricket in France.

French *Lycées.*

The French would have had a tolerable equivalent for cricket if they had kept up their own fine national game of tennis. Unfortunately the costliness of tennis-courts has caused the abandonment of the game, and this is the more to be regretted that the French system of education in large public schools might have harmonised so conveniently with it. Field tennis, the parent of modern English lawn tennis, might have been kept up in the country. The present French tendency in exercises is towards gymnastics and military drill. No one who has

Tennis.

observed the two peoples closely can doubt that the French have more natural affinity for gymnastics than the English. This may be due in part to their less lively interest in physical amusements. Not being so ready to amuse themselves freely in active pastimes, they are more ready to accept gymnastics as a discipline.[1] As for military drill, it is more and more imposed upon the French by the military situation in Europe, so that they would practise it whether they liked it or not; still, it is certain that they have a natural liking and aptitude for military exercises. The authorities who have directed public education in France in the middle of the nineteenth century have treated physical exercise with such complete neglect that a reaction is now setting in. It may be doubted whether in any age or country the brain has been worked with such complete disregard of the body as in France from 1830 to 1870. An observer may see the consequences of that absurd education even now in the stiff elderly men who never knew what activity is, the men who cannot get into a boat quickly or safely, who never mounted a horse, and who take curious precautions in getting down from a carriage. The present generation is more active—the effects of gymnastics are beginning to tell. The comprehensive conscription, which imposes military exercises on almost every valid citizen, has also been, and will be still more in the future, a great bodily benefit

French Affinity for Gymnastics.

Military Drill.

Consequences of Neglect.

Military Exercises.

[1] It is curious that the French gymnastic societies should be rather discouraged by the Church, as giving too much attention to the body. I have seen formal expressions of clerical disapprobation. There may be some other reason. Everything has a political colour in France, and I believe that the gymnastic societies, now very numerous, are mainly republican.

Duelling.

to the French race. The maintenance of duelling in France, after its abandonment in England, gives the French a certain advantage in the habitual practice of fencing, which is learned seriously, as men only learn those things on which living or life may one day depend. I need not expatiate on the merits of fencing as an exercise. It increases both strength and grace, as it is at the same time extremely fatiguing and exacting with regard to posture and attitude. I am inclined to believe that fencing is the finest exercise known.

Pedestrianism.

In ordinary pedestrianism there is not much difference between the two countries except in the female sex, and

Englishwomen and Frenchwomen.

there it is strongly marked. Englishwomen who have leisure walk perhaps three or four times as much as Frenchwomen in the same position. Young men in both countries may be equally good walkers if they have the

French Peasants.

advantage of rural life. The French peasants are slow pedestrians but remarkably enduring; they will go forty or fifty miles in the twenty-four hours, being out all night,

Riding on Horseback.

and think nothing of it. Riding on horseback is much more practised in England; the economy of the carriage, by which one horse can transport several persons, and the excellent modern roads, had almost killed equestrianism in France, but now there are some signs of a revival. Here, too, the large national army has an excellent influence. Great numbers of Frenchmen learn to ride in

Cavalry and Artillery.

the cavalry and artillery, and the captains of infantry are all mounted. There is not, in France, the most valuable training of all, that of riding to hounds in the English

English Hunting.

sense; and therefore it is probable that England could produce a far greater number of horsemen able to leap well. As for style in riding, that is a matter of taste, and

national ideas differ. The French style is derived chiefly from military examples, the English indirectly from the hunting-field.

False Ideals of Dignity.

False ideals of dignity are very inimical to effective bodily exercise. A foolish notion that it is more dignified to be seen in a carriage than on horseback, has deprived all French ecclesiastics of the use of the saddle. Their modes of locomotion are settled by a fixed rule; they may walk (generally with the breviary in their hands, which they read whilst walking), and the poor curé may now keep a small pony carriage. A bishop must always ride in a close carriage drawn by a pair of horses. A curé may drive himself; a bishop may not drive. In England these rules are not so strict, as the clergy are not so widely different from the laity. The English clergyman may ride on horseback and be active in other ways; still, there is a prejudice even in England against too much healthy activity in clergymen. Being on a visit to a vicar in the north of England, I found that he possessed a complete apparatus for archery. "That is a good thing for you," I said; but he looked melancholy, and answered, "It would be if my parishioners permitted the use of it, but they talked so much that I was forced to give up archery. They considered it unbecoming in a clergyman, who ought to be attending to his parish. Had I spent the same time over a decanter of port wine in my dining-room they would have raised no objection." The same clergyman was fond of leaping, but indulged that passion in secret, as if it had been a sin. Still, these prejudices are stronger in France. I never saw a French priest shoot, or hunt, or row in a boat. It cannot be the cruelty of shooting and hunting which prevents him, as

French Ecclesiastics.

Exercises permitted to English Clergymen.

he is allowed to fish with hooks; it is simply the activity of the manlier sports that excites disapprobation. All Frenchmen who care for their dignity avoid velocipedes of all kinds, which are used only by young men, who are generally in the middle class, such as clerks and shop-keepers' assistants. In England, where the prejudice against activity is not so strong, velocipedes are often used by rather elderly gentlemen, who are not ashamed of being active.

French Notions of Dignity.

French Prejudice against Boating.

There was formerly an intense prejudice against boating in France. It was considered low, and even immoral, being inextricably associated in the popular mind with excursions in the worst possible feminine society. Nobody in those days understood that sailing and rowing could both be refined and pure pleasures. The first book published on amateur boating in France appeared to authorise these prejudices by its own intense vulgarity. Since then boating has gained in dignity, and there are now regattas at most of the river-side towns, with beautifully constructed boats and perfectly respectable crews. The whole tone of the pursuit has changed; it has got rid of vulgar pleasantry, and has become scientific, an improvement greatly helped by the excellent scientific review *Le Yacht*. Many French boating men have been led by their pursuit to a thorough study of construction and nautical qualities. The only objection I have to make to French boating as it exists to-day, is that it seems too dependent on the stimulus of regattas, and carried on too exclusively with that object. The best lover of boating follows it for itself, as a lover of reading does not read only for a degree.

Present State of Boating in France.

Although the French are now little, if at all, inferior to

the English either in rowing or sailing, the taste for these pursuits is limited to comparatively few persons in France. If such a marvellously perfect river as the Saône existed in England it would swarm with pleasure craft of all kinds, but as it happens to be in France you may travel upon it all day without seeing one white sail. There are, however, three or four regatta clubs with excellent boats. I know one Frenchman who delights in possessing sailing vessels, but never uses them, and I remember a yachtsman whose ship floated idly on the water from one regatta to another. Now and then you meet with the genuine nautical passion in all its strength, with the consequence that it is perfectly unintelligible to all wise and dignified citizens.

Taste for Boating limited in France.

French Regatta Clubs.

The Nautical Passion.

Swimming is much more cultivated and practised in France than in England. This is probably due in some degree to the hot French summers, which warm the water so thoroughly that one may remain in it a long time without chill. All along the Saône the boys learn swimming at a very early age. It is the boast of the village of St. Laurent, opposite Mâcon, that every male can swim. Ask one of the villagers if he is a swimmer, and he does not answer "Yes," but smiles significantly, and says, "*Je suis de St. Laurent.*" Wherever a river provides a deep pool it is used as a swimming bath. In England the accomplishment is much more rare, and is usually confined to the middle and upper classes, especially in the rural districts. When we read in the newspaper that an English boat has capsized we always expect to find that most of the occupants were unable to swim and sank to rise no more. Amongst English sailors the art seems to be nearly unknown, and they have even a prejudice

Swimming.

Prevalence of Swimming in France.

Swimming in England.

against it as tending to prolong the agonies of drowning. In the female sex, also, France takes the lead by the number of ladies who can swim a little, though they have not a Miss Beckwith amongst them, any more than Frenchmen can produce a Captain Webb. It is characteristic of England, with her vigorous race, to produce the finest and strongest swimmers, though her general average is so deplorably low. One English family may be long remembered, that of Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, who progressed grandly in the Thames, followed by his nine sons.

Exceptional Excellence.

Low Average.

Dancing.

Dancing used to be an essentially French exercise, and as it was much practised in the open air it was conducive to healthy activity. The best kind of dancing was that which used to bring together a few peasant families in the summer evenings. The reader observes that I am speaking of the past. In the present day dancing of that kind seems to be almost entirely abandoned. Unhealthy dancing in small crowded rooms is practised to some extent by the middle classes. As for the *bals publics*, the fewer of them there are the better. In obvious ways, and in ways that I can only hint at, they are injurious to the public health.

Field Sports.

In field sports the chief difference between France and England is not a difference of taste for sport itself, but a difference in game-preserving. In England this is carried to the utmost perfection by the most artificial means and at enormous cost; in France this is done only on a few estates, and ordinary game-preserving is very lax and very economical. Often it is merely nominal. Some man with another occupation is supposed to be the *garde*, and he walks over the estate

occasionally with a gun, killing a hare or a partridge for his private use, and seldom arresting a poacher. Still, the shootings are supposed to be worth something, as they are let, though at low prices. The English believe that there is no game at all in France, except a few partridges; and they might quote French humorists in support of this opinion, as they have laughed at the Parisian sportsman and his empty bags from time immemorial. However, as this is not a comic account, but an attempt to tell the truth, I may say that for several years my sons kept my larder very fairly supplied with game in the shooting season, including hares, partridges, woodcocks, snipes, and wild ducks. The neighbouring squires occasionally kill a deer or a wild boar, and one nobleman has killed many wild boars, some of them magnificent beasts. As a rule, a French sportsman walks much for little game, and is himself quite aware that the game is a mere pretext; the exercise is the real object. If the English reader thinks this ridiculous, I may remind him that English fox-hunting is an application of the same principle. A hundred horsemen follow a single fox, and when he is killed they do not even eat him.[1]

Shooting in France.

Game not over-abundant.

There is nothing that resembles English hunting in France. French hunting is pretty and picturesque, with some remnant of old-world costume and ceremonial, and it affords some exercise in riding about the roads through the dense forests, but as a training in horsemanship it is

French Hunting.

[1] A French friend of one of my sons was invited to shoot at Ferrières, on the preserves of Baron Rothschild, but he said he soon had enough of it, as the game was so abundant that the interest in the pursuit of it was entirely destroyed. He compared it, as an amusement, with the shooting of fowls in a poultry yard.

not comparable to such hunting as I have witnessed in Yorkshire. French farmers and peasant proprietors would never permit a regiment of gentlemen to spoil their fences; that can only be done in a very aristocratic country.

Contrast between Classes in regard to the Physical Life.

As to the physical life, both England and France present the same contrasts, but they are more striking in England. There you have an active and vigorous upper class much enjoying the open air, and a lower class in the big towns living without either pure air or healthy exercise. The physical quality of the race is well maintained, and even improved, at one end of the scale, and deteriorated at the other. Unfortunately the class which deteriorates, the lowest urban class, is not only the more numerous, but also reckless in reproduction, so that its power for degradation is greater than the aristocratic conservative or improving power. The ideal would be a whole nation physically equal to the English aristocracy. That aristocracy has undoubtedly set the example of healthy living, but the objection is that its fine health costs too much. With its immense apparatus of guns, yachts, and horses, its great army of servants, its extensive playgrounds, the aristocracy sets an example that cannot be followed by the poor man, shut up in the atmosphere of a factory all day and sleeping in an ill-drained street at night. The rich have another immense advantage in the free access to natural beauty, which is favourable to cheerfulness and therefore indirectly to health. The ancient Greeks, who led the perfect physical life, were surrounded by noble scenery, glorious in colour. Compare the foul sky and spoilt landscape of Manchester with the purple hills, brilliant sunlight, wondrously clear

The desirable Ideal.

Apparatus of the English Aristocracy.

Access to Natural Beauty.

atmosphere, and waters of intensest azure, that surrounded the City of the Violet Crown!

English and French Middle Classes.

Putting aside the aristocracies of both countries, which may live as healthily as they please, let us examine the state of the middle classes and the common people. The middle classes in both take insufficient out-door exercise, their occupations are too confining and too sedentary, they stiffen prematurely, and after that are fit for nothing but formal walks. Their physical life is lower than that of the aristocracy and lower than that of the agricultural population. The two greatest blessings in our time for the English of the middle class have been velocipedes and volunteering. France has one advantage over England in the numbers of the peasant class, which leads a healthy and active life, though its activity is of a slow and plodding kind. The factory population, proportionally much larger in England, is more unfavourably situated. It undergoes wasting fatigue in bad over-heated air, but it does not get real exercise; consequently, whilst the aristocracy keeps up its strength, the factory population deteriorates.

Peasants.

Factory Population.

Comparison of the two Races.

A comparison of English and French physical qualities leads to the following conclusions. The English are by nature incomparably the finer and handsomer race of the two; but their industrial system, and the increasing concentration in large towns, are rapidly diminishing their collective superiority, though it still remains strikingly visible in the upper classes. The French are generally of small stature,[1] so that a man of middle height in

[1] There are some remarkable exceptions. It would be possible to form one French regiment of very fine men, but I doubt if there are enough for two regiments. Napoleon's *Cent Gardes* were specimens.

England is a tall man in France, and French soldiers in their summer fatigue blouses look to an Englishman like boys. Still, though the ordinary Frenchman is short, he is often muscular and capable of bearing great fatigue, as a good pony will. His shortness is mainly in the legs, yet he strides vigorously in marching.

The Physical Future of the English and French Races.

One cannot look to the physical future of either race without the gravest anxiety. Unless some means be found for arresting the decline caused by industrialism and the rapid using-up of life in large cities, it will ruin both races in course of time. Already the French physicians recognise a new type, sharp and sarcastic mentally, with visible physical inferiority, the special product of Paris. The general spread of a certain education is indisposing the French for that rural peasant life which was their source of national health, and the population of England is crowding into the large towns. There are two grounds of hope, and only two. The first is the modern scientific spirit, with its louder and louder warnings against the neglect of the body; the second is the extension of military training, of which I shall have more to say in another chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION

ENGLAND and France have been governed, since the Renaissance, by the same ideas about intellectual education, though there have been certain differences in the application of these ideas.

Educators in both countries have persistently maintained the incomparable superiority of Latin and Greek over modern languages, not only for their linguistic merits, but also on the ground that the literature enshrined in them was infinitely superior to any modern literature whatever. French education insisted chiefly upon Latin. Frenchmen take "learning" to be equivalent to Latin. They call a man *instruit* when he has learned Latin, although he may have a very limited acquaintance with Greek, and they say that one *a fait des études incomplètes* when he has not taken his bachelor's degree, which implies that bachelors have made *des études complètes* though they know Greek very imperfectly.

Latin and Greek.

Latin in France.

In England Latin was considered necessary, but Greek was the great object of achievement. A "scholar," in England, means especially a Greek scholar. One may be a scholar without Hebrew or Arabic, but certainly not

Greek in England.

without Greek. The ordinary level of French attainment in Hellenic studies appears contemptible to the English of the learned class.

The Principle common to both Countries.

However, the principle was the same in both countries, and may be expressed in terms applicable to both. That principle was the choice of an ancient language that could be taught authoritatively by the learned in each country. They can never teach a modern language in that authoritative way, as in modern languages their degree of accomplishment must always be inferior to that of the educated native. When the teacher assumes great dignity it is essential to its maintenance that he should be secure from this crushing rivalry, and this security can be given by an ancient language alone. Besides this professional consideration there is the effect of antiquity, and of a certain mystery, on the popular mind. So long as the people could be made to believe that a lofty and peculiar wisdom, not communicable in translations, was enshrined in Latin and Greek words, the learned were supposed to be in possession of mysterious intellectual advantages. There was even an hieratic quality in the dead languages. Closely connected with religion, they were the especial study of priests, and communicated by them to the highest classes of the laity. They belonged to the two most powerful castes, the sacerdotal and the aristocratic. Even yet the French village priest not only says mass in Latin, but makes quotations in Latin from the Vulgate when preaching to illiterate peasants. He appeals in this way to that reverence for, and awe of, mysterious words which belongs to the uncultured man. He knows, but does not tell his humble audience, that the Vulgate is itself a translation, and that, were it not for the effect

Dignity of the Teacher.

Antiquity and Mystery.

Hieratic quality of the dead Languages.

Latin Quotations.

of mystery, he might equally give the passage in French.

In the same way a knowledge, or even a supposed knowledge, of Latin gave laymen an ascendency over the lower classes and over women in their own rank. It was easy for a Frenchman who knew no English to declare to a French audience equally ignorant that the whole vast range of English literature was not worthy of comparison with what has come down to us from ancient Rome. He could class English authors in the two categories of barbarians who knew nothing of antiquity and imitators who feebly attempted to copy its inimitable masterpieces. The only education worthy of the name was that which he himself possessed, and those literatures that he did not know were simply not worth knowing.

French Contempt for Modern Literatures

The intensely conventional nature of these beliefs, both in France and England, may be proved by their inconsistency. It was laid down as a principle that a knowledge of ancient books through translations was not knowledge, yet at the same time the clergy, with very few exceptions, were dependent on translations for all they knew of the Old Testament, and few French laymen had Greek enough even to read the Gospels. In either country you may pass for a learned man though destitute of any critical or historical knowledge of the literature of your native tongue. One may be a learned Englishman without knowing Anglo-Saxon, or a learned Frenchman though ignorant of the *langue d'oil*.

Conventionalism.

Inconsistency.

Learning and Ignorance.

The close of the nineteenth century is marked by two tendencies that seem opposed yet are strictly consistent, being both the consequence of an increased desire

Modern Tendencies.

for reality in education. One is a tendency to much greater thoroughness in classical studies themselves, and the other a tendency, every day more marked, to abandon those studies when true success is either not desired, or in the nature of things unattainable. The greater thoroughness of modern study is sufficiently proved by the better quality of the books which help the learner, and the most remarkable point in the apparently contradictory condition of the modern mind is that the age which has perfected all the instruments for classical study is the first age since the Renaissance to propose seriously its general, though not universal, abandonment. M. Raoul Frary, himself a scholar, has been so impressed by the present imperfection and incompleteness of classical studies that he has seriously proposed the abolition of Latin as a compulsory study for boys. "Only one thing," he says, "could justify the crushing labour of beginning Latin, that would be the full possession and entire enjoyment of the ancient masterpieces, and that is precisely what is wanting to the crowd of students. They leave school too soon, and the later years are too much crowded with work to allow any time for reading." For the same reason, the uselessness of partly learned Latin as an instrument of culture, Professor Seeley wisely proposes to defer the commencement of that study to the age of fourteen,[1] and spend the time so gained on English. Greek, I conclude, he would defer for two or

Thoroughness of Modern Study.

Proposed Abandonment of the Classics. M. Raoul Frary.

Professor Seeley's Proposal.

[1] "In that case," it may be objected, "boys who left school at fourteen would miss Latin altogether." Yes, it is Professor Seeley's desire that they should omit Latin, and those who left at sixteen would omit Greek. The time so gained would be devoted to real culture through English.

three years longer. Not only M. Frary, but some other Frenchmen who appreciate Greek for themselves, would exclude it entirely from the *lycées*. "Amongst the young men," he says, "who come out of our colleges, not one in ten is able to read even an easy Greek author, not one in a hundred will take the trouble. We will not discuss the question whether our youth ought to cease to learn Greek. They do not learn it, the question is settled by the fact."

With my deference on these questions to those who are accustomed to teaching, I have submitted M. Frary's book (*La Question du Latin*) to two or three masters in *lycées*, and their answer to it is this. They say: "It is quite true that, considered as an acquisition, the Greek taught in *lycées* does not count, and though Latin is learned much better the pupils gain a very small acquaintance with Latin literature, and that chiefly by fragments; nevertheless, we do unquestionably find that, as gymnastics, these studies cannot be replaced by anything else that we know of. There are now pupils who do not study Latin or Greek, and we find that when they are brought into contact with the others *on other subjects* their intelligence seems undeveloped and inflexible. It is difficult, and often impossible, to make them understand things that are plain to the classical students."[1]

Opinion of Masters in French *Lycées*.

Mental Gymnastics.

[1] Since the above paragraph was written I have consulted a very able *Professeur de Faculté* and Latin examiner on this *Question du Latin*. He says: "The young men who come up for examination have an imperfect knowledge of Latin, and the standard of attainment falls lower and lower. The remedy that I should propose would be to reduce to fifteen the number of *lycées* where Latin and Greek are taught. In those fifteen *lycées* I would maintain a really high standard of genuine scholarship. That would be sufficient for

Here I leave this *Question du Latin*, regretting only that the quickened intelligence of classical students should fail to master their own particular study. The value of modern languages, as a discipline, cannot easily be ascertained, because they are rarely studied in that spirit. They have been systematically kept in a position of inferiority, by giving them insufficient time and by employing incompetent masters. They were established as a study in the French public schools by a royal ordinance, dated March 26, 1829, but M. Beljame[1] tells us that nothing was done to insure the competence of the teachers. These were picked up entirely by accident. "The masters of those days were generally political exiles, and even the best educated amongst them had never previously thought of teaching. When they were French no better qualifications were required. A member of the University told me that he had had for teachers of English in the State schools, first, the town hatter, who had a business connection with England, then the cook from the best hotel, who had exercised his art on the other side the Channel. These gentlemen were good enough to give some of their leisure moments to the University. No examination was required, either from foreigners or Frenchmen. Foreigners were supposed to know their language; as for the others, some functionary, usually quite ignorant of every European tongue, put the question,

Modern Languages.

In French Public Schools.

Quality of the Teachers.

A Hatter.

A Cook.

Examination.

all the real scholars that the country wants, and then the teaching in the ordinary *lycées*, being relieved of false pretension about Latin and Greek, might itself become genuine in other ways."

[1] In an article in the *Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement* for April 15, 1885. The article contains many interesting details.

'Do you know German?' or, 'Do you know English?' The candidate answered 'Yes,' and received at once the necessary authorisation." Francisque Sarcey, in his *Souvenirs de Jeunesse*, tells us that in his time the hour nominally devoted to English was passed at leap-frog, that being the traditional way of spending it. Even at the *École Normale* the teaching of modern languages was entrusted to a pupil, and if no pupil happened to possess a knowledge of English or German some teacher was sought elsewhere.

Experience of F. Sarcey.

The *École Normale*.

These were the miserable beginnings. In the present year (1888) the study of modern languages is better established in France than in England. It is obligatory in secondary education. Teachers in the *lycées* are required to be either *bacheliers ès lettres* or to have a corresponding foreign degree, and it is hoped that before long the *licence ès lettres* (equivalent to the English mastership) will be exacted. They have to pass a special linguistic examination for a certificate before they can teach in the *lycées*. This examination is a serious test, but it is much less severe than the competitive trial for the *agrégation*. The certificate gives the rank of a *licencié*, the *agrégation* that of a Fellow of the University. Every year the candidates are of a better class. M. Beljame says that he knows thirty teachers of English who were already *licenciés*, and amongst the candidates in 1884 twelve had already taken that degree. In short, the teachers of modern languages are now rapidly assuming the same position in the University as the classical masters; and it is only just that they should do so, since they have the same general culture, and their special examinations are more searching. For example, the candidate for the

State of Things in 1888.

Quality of Present Teachers.

Improvement in the Class of Teachers in France.

*agrégation* has to lecture twice, before the examiners at the Sorbonne and in public, once in English and once in French.

Teachers of Modern Languages in England. Their low Status.

In England the teachers of modern languages pass no examinations and have no dignity. They are often required to render services outside of their special work. They are wretchedly paid, have no sort of equality with classical masters, and are considered to belong to an inferior grade. When they are foreigners they are looked upon as poor aliens.

Supposed Facility of Modern Languages.

The belief that modern languages are easy, although erroneous, is against them, the truth being that the pupils do not go far enough in these languages to become aware of the real difficulties. They think that Italian is easy, not knowing that there are two thousand irregular verbs, and they think that French is easy, not knowing that French boys, specially drilled and disciplined in their own tongue, have to be wary to avoid its pitfalls.

The results of the improved teaching of modern languages have not yet had time to become visible in France.

Quality of the Pupils in France.

Teachers tell me that amongst their pupils a certain proportion show a natural taste and aptitude, and take heartily to their work.[1] The rest count for nothing,

[1] The following is a genuine English address from pupils in a Parisian *lycée* to their master :—

"My dear and respected Professor—I take the liberty of testifying the feelings of gratitude which animate us all since we have been under your tutorship.

"No doubt we have been lacking in zeal and attention, but we nevertheless appreciate fully the pains you have evidently taken for our benefit. We therefore assure you that if you are not satisfied, we take the engagement to strive to do better hereafter; and you shall see that we will be faithful to our word.

"We terminate with the desire that you will sincerely accept this as a true testimonial of our real affection and respect."

Creditable, though not faultless.

and will retain only a limited vocabulary. In England some knowledge of modern languages is, as yet, much more general, but it seldom reaches the degree of what can be seriously called "learning." The practical difficulty is that the unripe minds of young students, especially of young ladies, are not ready for the strongest books, and they take no interest in the history and development of a language, so they soon fall back upon the easy and amusing literature of the present, to the neglect of the great authors. That is the misfortune of modern languages as an intellectual pursuit.

Rarity of Learning in Modern Languages.

The Practical Difficulty.

It very rarely happens that a reader of either nationality has any appreciation of the poetry of the other. We may begin by setting aside that immense majority of prosaic minds which exist in all countries, and for whom all poetry must be for ever unintelligible. After them come those lovers of poetry who enjoy rhyme but cannot hear the music of blank verse. The French are in that position with regard to English poetry, though they claim an appreciation of blank verse in Horace and Virgil. Then, even in rhymed poetry, there remains the prodigious difficulty of pronunciation. Sound and feeling must go together in poetry, but the foreigner rarely has the sound. And even if he could imitate sounds exactly there would still remain the lack of those early associations to which poets are constantly appealing, both by subtle allusion and by the affectionate choice of words. The foreigner, too, has a difficulty in gliding over the unimportant expletive phrases; they acquire too much consequence in his eyes. The conventionalisms of the art strike the foreigner too forcibly. When an Englishman, in reading his own language, follows poetic ideas, a Frenchman is

Rare Appreciation of Foreign Poetry.

Blank Verse.

Rhyme.

Expletive Phrases.

Difficulties in English Poetry for Frenchmen.

embarrassed by what seems to him the lawlessness of the versification, and he seeks for rules. On the other hand, the elaborate rules of French versification seem pedantic to an English mind, which perceives no necessary connection between such artificial restraints and the agile spirit of poetry. Was ever yet English scholar so learned that he could feel properly shocked by what shocks a French critic in verse? How is the foreigner to disengage the poetic from the conventional element? Since both English and French scholars believe that they have mastered all the secrets of Greek and Latin versification, it might be inferred that there is no insuperable difficulty in that of a modern tongue; yet where is the Englishman, except Swinburne, who in reading a French poem knows good technical workmanship when he sees it?

English Difficulties with French Verse.

Technical Workmanship.

Conventionalism of French Ignorance.

French ignorance of English literature would be amazing if it were not the result of a conventionalism. It is conventionally "ignorance" in France not to have heard of Milton; it is not ignorance never to have heard of Spenser. A Frenchman is ignorant if the name of Byron is not familiar to him, but he need not know even the names of Shelley and Keats. He is not required, by the conventionalism of his own country, to know anything whatever of living English genius. A London newspaper amused itself with sketching a possible Academy for England, and named some eminent Englishmen as qualified to be members. The names included Browning, Ruskin, Arnold, Lecky, and other first-rate men. On this, certain Parisian journalists were infinitely amused. Their sense of the ludicrous was irresistibly tickled when they saw that individuals like these, whom nobody had

A proposed English Academy.

ever heard of, could be proposed as equivalents for the forty French immortals.

Independently of learning, modern languages are supposed to be useful for conversation. They are, however, very rarely studied or practised to the degree necessary for that use. The foreigner may be able to order his dinner at his hotel and ascertain when the train starts, but in cultivated society he only pretends to be able to follow what is said. His impressions about the talk that is going on around him are a succession of misunderstandings. He sits silent and smiling, and he endeavours to look as if he were not outside and in the dark; but he *is* in the dark, or, worse still, surrounded by deceptive glimpses. It would be better if French or English were like Chinese for him.

Rarity of Conversational Accomplishment in Foreign Tongues.

The Foreigner in Society.

The future towards which we are rapidly tending may already be seen in the distance. Latin and Greek will be given up for ordinary schoolboys, both in England and France, but the study of them will be maintained by a small *élite*. This *élite* will have a better chance of existence in England, where superiorities of all kinds are not only tolerated but respected, than it can have in France, where the modern instincts all tend to the formation of an immensely numerous, half-educated middle class. When the classical literatures shall be pursued, as the fine arts are now, by their own elect, and not imposed on every incapable schoolboy, they will be better studied and better loved. Now, with regard to modern languages I have no illusions left. You cannot convert a Philistine into a lover of good literature by teaching him a foreign tongue. If he did not love it in his own language, he is not likely to take to it in another. Every man has his

The Future.

Abandonment of Latin and Greek.

An *élite*.

Modern Languages.

Men remain on their own Level.

own intellectual level, and on that level he will remain, whatever language you teach him. To make a Frenchman appreciate Milton or Spenser, it is not enough to teach him English; you would have to endow him with the poetic sense, with the faculty that delights in accompanying a poet's mind—in a word, with all the poetic gifts except invention. Neither are all men fit to read noble prose. Minds incapable of sustained attention read newspaper paragraphs in English, and in French they would still read newspaper paragraphs. What I mean is

Languages do not elevate the Mind.

that languages do not elevate the mind, they merely extend the range of its ordinary action. Teach a French gossip English and she will gossip in two languages, she will not perceive the futility of gossiping. This explains

Mean Use made of Languages.

the poor and mean use that is constantly made of modern languages by many who have acquired them, and the remarkable unanimity with which such people avoid every great author, and even all intelligent intercourse with foreigners, reading nothing and hearing nothing that is worth remembering.

Hollow Pretensions.

In all things connected with education we are in a world of hollow pretensions. The speeches at prize distributions assume that pupils will make use of their knowledge afterwards. They are told that the wonderful literatures of Greece and Rome now lie open before them like gardens where they have but to wander and cull flowers. If they have studied modern languages they are told that European literature is theirs. The plain truth is, that both in England and France, and especially in

Smallness of the Studious Class.

France, there is a small studious class isolated in the midst of masses occupied with pleasure or affairs, and so indifferent to intellectual pursuits that the slightest mental

labour is enough to deter them.' Whatever reading they do is in the direction of least resistance. They have no enterprise, they find all but the easiest reading irksome, and the obstacle of the easiest foreign language insurmountable. They will play cards or dominoes in the daytime rather than take down a classic author from his shelf. A guest in a French chateau told me that on seeing the ennui that reigned there, whilst nobody read anything, she asked if there were any books in the house, and was shown into a library of classics formed in a previous generation but never opened in this. All testimony that comes to me about French interiors confirms the belief that the number of people who form libraries has greatly diminished. It was once the custom in the upper class, but nobody would say that it is the custom now. In twelve or fifteen country-houses known to a friend of mine there was only one library, and, what is more significant, only one man deserving the name of a reader. Even in England, where people read certainly three times as much as they do in France, the expenditure on books bears no proportion to income, except in the case of a few scholars. How many English houses are there, of the wealthy middle class, where you could not find a copy of the representative English authors, and where foreign literatures are unknown!

Idleness of the unintellectual.

Libraries in French Houses.

Expenditure on Books in England.

Unknown—with one exception. The belief that Hebrew literature is one book, and that it was written by God himself, and that the English translation of it has a peculiar sanctity, has given the English middle class a familiarity with that literature which is a superiority over the French middle class. The French Catholic laity only knows the Bible through *l'Histoire Sainte* and selec-

English knowledge of the Bible.

tions; the unbelievers take no interest in it. Nothing surprises an Englishman more than French ignorance of the Bible; yet it is probable that if ever the English cease to believe in the dogma of inspiration they will neglect the whole Bible as they neglect the Apocrypha now.

Possibility of Future Neglect.

Scientific Education.

Science has a stronger basis than literature in modern education because it offers useful results. In France the usefully educated young men are well educated in their way. The time spent on their education is strictly economised with a view to a definite result, and the effect of it is to turn out numbers of young men from the *École Centrale* and other schools who at once enter upon practical duties with a readiness that speaks much for the system. They are, however, so specially prepared that they have omitted the useless and the superfluous—"*le superflu, chose si nécessaire!*" In cutting away the superfluous the practical educator throws literature overboard. Well, without literature, it is still possible to sharpen the faculties and store the mind, but without literature education misses what is best and most interesting in the world. To a generation "usefully" educated Europe will be like a new continent destitute of memories and associations, a region where there are mines to be worked and railways to be made.

Usefully educated Young Men.

Sacrifice of the Superfluous.

Effects of the Loss of Literature.

French Secondary Education.

As the French system of secondary education extends over the whole country, an account of the most important changes in it may be worth giving in a few words.

The Old System.

The old system, from the time of Napoleon I. to the middle of the century, was founded on classical studies, with lighter scientific studies and those chiefly mathematical. After taking their bachelor's degree, those

students who were intended for certain Government schools (*Écoles Polytechnique, Centrale, Normale supérieure pour les sciences*) received further scientific instruction in special classes. This was the old system, but in 1853 an important change was introduced by M. Fortoul's ministry, which invented what was long known as the *bifurcation*. On leaving the fourth class, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, pupils were required to choose between literary studies with a slight scientific supplement or the converse. Both kinds of students continued at that time to attend together the lectures on history and geography, and so much of modern languages as was then taught, besides the classes for Latin translation and the French classes. This was the system known as the *bifurcation*, but it did not work very well in practice, because the scientific students fell too far behind the literary students to follow profitably the same Latin classes.

The *Bifurcation*.

The *Bifurcation* did not work well.

In October 1864, under Duruy's ministry, there was a new departure. He established the *enseignement secondaire spécial*. This scheme of teaching excluded Latin, which was replaced by a modern language, and it embraced rather an extensive programme, outside of classical studies, with such subjects as mathematical and natural science, political economy, and law.

The *Enseignement Spécial*.

Under the existing system the *enseignement spécial* includes two modern languages instead of one, and of these one is taken as "principal," the other as "accessory," at the student's choice, he being more severely examined in that which he selects as "principal." The present varieties of public secondary education may be described under three heads.

Present State of the *Enseignement Spécial*.

Present Varieties in French Secondary Education.

1: Ancient languages, with a little science and one modern language.

2. Scientific education, with a little Latin and one modern language.

3. Scientific education, with two modern languages, no Latin.

Enough has been already said in this chapter on the degrees of proficiency attained. My own belief is that no acquirement whatever really becomes our own until we make constant use of it for ourselves, and it is impossible to make a constant use of more than a very few acquirements. It is here, in my opinion, that is to be found the true explanation of that perpetual disappointment which attends almost all educational experiments. They may provide the instrument; they cannot insure its use. This is what makes professional education, of all kinds, so much more real than any other, and the scientific professions do certainly keep up the scientific spirit. There is not any profession (certainly not school-teaching or hack-writing) which maintains the pure literary spirit in the same way.

Necessity for using Acquirements.

## CHAPTER III

### ARTISTIC EDUCATION

In both music and drawing the French have shown themselves far better educators than in languages. Their ways of teaching drawing are especially marked by seriousness, by the discouragement of false, ignorant, and premature finish, by the wise use of simple and common materials, and by the consistent aim at sound knowledge rather than vain display. As the French have taught painting and sculpture they are both most serious pursuits; I mean that, if the French may often have been frivolous in the subsequent employment of their knowledge, they were assuredly not frivolous in the acquisition of it. For them the fine arts have been a discipline, a culture that has penetrated beyond the artist class.

Qualities of French Art Education.

Serious Nature of French Teaching.

The seriousness of French teaching has been accompanied by an admirable disinterestedness. Artists of the highest reputation, every hour of whose time was valuable, have been willing to undertake the direction of private schools of painting on terms that barely paid the rent of the studio and the hire of models. There they have given the most sincere and kindly advice to hundreds of students, both Frenchmen and foreigners, from whom they had nothing to expect but a little gratitude, and,

French Disinterestedness.

Generosity of distinguished French Artists.

perhaps, the reflected honour of having aided one or two youths of genius amidst a crowd of mediocrities.

Extension of Art Teaching in England.

In England this kind of teaching is all but unknown, yet a certain culture of the faculties by means of drawing is incomparably more general than it was in the beginning of the century. The total number of "persons taught drawing, painting, or modelling through the agency of the Science and Art Department" is now approaching a million, and this independently of the considerable numbers of young English people who study art privately or in other schools. The result of this culture is already plainly visible in the wonderful improvement of English taste and skill in everything that art can influence, an improvement that nobody could have foreseen in the first half of the present century.

Results in the Improvement of English Taste and Skill.

French Efforts in Popular Art Education.

In France, too, great efforts have been made to spread a knowledge of sound elementary drawing amongst the people. It is now a part of the regular course of education for the middle classes in the *lycées*, and there are cheap public drawing schools all over the country. In England this is a new enterprise, in France it is an attempt to recover lost ground; as the French workmen of the eighteenth century were certainly more artistic than their successors, and must have understood design more thoroughly. Even in the Middle Ages, as we know from the excellence of the work left to us, the common workmen cannot have been ignorant of art.

The real Motive. France and England not Artistic Nations. French Provincial Towns.

The real motive for this modern increase in art-culture is not the disinterested love of art, it is the desire for commercial success. France and England are not now really artistic nations. In the French provincial cities the modern buildings, which are so rapidly replacing what

remains of the mediæval ones, display, as a rule, no artistic invention whatever, and if the English people were suddenly to awake one morning with an artist's passion for the beautiful they would not be able to endure the prevalent ugliness of their towns. Still, though the nations are not artistic, both races produce exceptional persons who are so, and these are allowed to have their own way more than formerly in the warfare that they wage against the hideous or the commonplace. Their argument in favour of the beautiful is the very simple one that it makes life pleasanter and, so far, happier, and in some of them this argument takes the kindly form of desiring, especially, to make beautiful things accessible to the poor. They might even go further, and affirm that beautiful surroundings are favourable to health, which they certainly are, by ministering to gaiety and cheerfulness and so increasing the charm of life. The perception of this truth would produce a very close alliance between philanthropic and artistic spirits, as we see already in the generous and thoughtful founders of the Manchester Art Museum.

The Argument for the Beautiful.

Value of Beautiful Surroundings.

Art education is an attempt to return consciously to conditions of life which have long ago been attained unconsciously and afterwards departed from. There are now many schools of art in Lancashire by way of reaction against the ugliness of the industrial age. There was a time when Lancashire knew neither ugliness nor schools of art. The habitations of the Lancashire people in the sixteenth century, and for some time later, were always artistic, whether magnificent or simple, and so was the furniture inside them. The art was not of an exquisite or an elevated order, but it *was* art, and it was interesting

Art in Lancashire.

A former artistic Condition.

The unspoiled Beauty of Nature.

and picturesque. The beauty of nature, too, was quite unspoiled, and though Lancashire was no more Switzerland than Manchester was Verona, still there was beauty enough in the county for all ordinary human needs; the pastoral valleys were green, the trout-streams pure, and if the skies were often gray it was only with clouds from the sea. The industrial epoch came and destroyed all this; it destroyed the vernacular architecture, it filled the beautiful valleys with the ugliest towns in the world, it fouled both the streams and the sky, it rapidly diminished even the health and beauty of the race. It is the conscious reaction against these evils which has made Lancashire a centre of artistic effort.

The Industrial Epoch.

Conditions of Urban Life in France.

In France there has never been the same acute consciousness that modern life was making itself hideous; and, in fact, the conditions of urban life in France, except in certain quarters of Lyons and Marseilles, very rarely approach the melancholy imprisonment of an English manufacturing town. Most of the French towns are comparatively small, the country is easily accessible on all sides, they all have avenues of trees (many of them really magnificent), and those which are situated on the great rivers have spacious and well-built quays, which are the favourite residence and resort. In a word, the difference between urban and rural life is seldom painfully or acutely felt. It is, I believe, a consequence of this comparative pleasantness of French country towns that the artistic life in them is so torpid. Provincial exhibitions are, in France, quite incomparably inferior to English provincial exhibitions. The fine arts are much more successfully cultivated in Manchester and Liverpool than in Rouen or in Lyons. As for the smaller French

Artistic Torpor. Inferiority of French Provincial Exhibitions.

towns, you find in them here and there an intelligent amateur, here and there a respectable artist, but, by the ordinary French *bourgeois*, art is not understood, it lies outside of his interests and his thoughts. He can no more appreciate style in painting and sculpture than he can appreciate it in literature. He lives in a country where you can hardly travel fifty miles without meeting with some remnant of noble architecture, and it has been necessary to pass a law to protect what remains against his ignorant spoliation. Contemporary provincial building is, as a rule, only masons' work, and whenever an old church or a château is in any way meddled with, the chances are that it will be ruined beyond remission. The provincial nobility very rarely give any evidence whatever of artistic culture or attainment. If they attempt anything, the result is poor and incongruous, some pepper-box turret added to the corner of a modern house, or some feeble attempt to imitate the mediæval castle.

The French *bourgeois*.

His Ignorance of Art.

Provincial Building.

The Provincial Nobility.

It may seem a contradiction to have begun this chapter with hearty praise of French methods in art-teaching, and to have continued it with depreciation of French taste, but, in fact, both praise and its opposite are deserved. Paris has maintained the light of art in France. Without Paris, contemporary France would have a very small place in artistic Europe; with Paris it still maintains, though against powerful rivals, a leadership. London has not any comparable influence. Many of the best English Academicians, including the President, have studied their art abroad. The methods of English Academical teaching, which require a minute and trifling finish in mere studies, are a waste of the pupil's time.

Paris the maintainer of Art in France.

English Academical Teaching.

Exceptional Genius in England.

The English race, usually destitute of any artistic faculty or perception, produces exceptional geniuses in quite as great numbers as the French. The faculties that raise art above mere technical cleverness to the region of poetry are not excessively rare in the home of poetry itself. In fact, the English tendency has been to rely upon native gifts too much, to the neglect of handicraft, yet even in artistic handicraft the English have made surprising progress in the thirty years between 1850 and 1880. Their art critics go on repeating the old complaint that there is little above the common level, but the common level itself has risen, and the complaint amounts merely to the truism that exceptional excellence is exceptional.

Poetic Art in England.

Improvement in English Handicraft.

Elevation of the Common Level.

The attainments of artists are, no doubt, a matter of national concern, as are the accomplishments of all workers; nevertheless, it is still more important, from the intellectual point of view, that art should be understood by many than that it should be dexterously practised by a few. Now, as to this separate question of intelligence concerning the fine arts, I have said elsewhere, and can only repeat, that in Paris it is wonderfully general, but not in the French provinces. Intelligence of that kind is common, without being general, in London, and not very rare in the other great English towns, whilst Edinburgh is incomparably more important as an art-centre than either Lyons or Marseilles. Neither the English nor the French aristocracy has ever, as a body,[1] shown an intelligent interest in art. For some reason that may be connected with the contempt felt by

The General Understanding of Art.

Paris and the Provinces.

London.

Edinburgh.

[1] There have been a few exceptions, such as Lord Egremont and the Duc de Luynes.

a *noblesse* for manual labour, the understanding of art seems to belong chiefly to the middle and lower classes, who often find in it a substitute for more expensive pleasures. As for the future, this kind of intelligence is likely to increase widely in the same classes, especially if art is more intimately associated with handicrafts and manufactures.

Art in the Middle and Lower Classes.

If I were asked what is the particular difficulty that usually prevents the English from understanding art, I should answer, The extreme energy and activity of their moral sense. They have a sort of moral hunger which tries to satisfy itself in season and out of season. That interferes with their understanding of a pursuit which lies outside of morals. The teaching of their most celebrated art-critic, Mr. Ruskin, was joyfully accepted by the English, because it seemed for the first time to place art upon a substantial moral foundation, making truth, industry, conscientiousness, its cardinal virtues. The English imagined, for a time, that they had subordinated the fine arts to their own dominant moral instincts. Painting was to abandon all its tricks and become truthful. It was to represent events as they really occurred, and not so as to make the best pictures, a sacrifice of art to veracity that pleased the innermost British conscience. Again, it was assumed that mere toil in the accurate representation of details was in itself a merit, because industry is meritorious in common occupations. In short, all the moral virtues were placed before art itself, which, in reality, is but accidentally connected with them.

The Particular Difficulty of the English.

Mr. Ruskin's Moral Criticism.

The Sacrifice of Art to Veracity.

Toil in Details.

The English love of nature, in itself one of the happiest of all gifts, has not been altogether favourable

The English love of Nature.

An Impediment to the Appreciation of Art.

to the understanding of art. It has led many English people to subordinate the fine arts entirely to nature, as if they were but poor human copies of an unapproachable divine original. In reality the fine arts can only be understood when they are pursued and valued for themselves..

The Parisian Mind.

The feebler moral sense of the Parisian mind and its less passionate affection for nature have left it more disengaged and more at liberty to accept art on its own account, as art and nothing more. There is a kind of Paganism which is able to rest content without deep moral problems, and to accept with satisfaction what art has to give without asking for that which it cannot give.

Diversity of Ideals.

The final word on the subject may be that there is a diversity of ideals, that the English ideal (speaking generally) is moral, and the Parisian ideal artistic.

## CHAPTER IV

### MORAL TRAINING

THIS chapter is very difficult to write, because I shall have to deal with what cannot be accurately ascertained. A man can hardly know how far he has been successful in the moral training of his own sons. As to the boys in the nearest school, he may ascertain what is taught them by their masters, but he cannot know the effects of the teaching on the formation of their characters; that can only be known much later, if at all. And when we pass to distant schools our knowledge must be so general and so vague that no trustworthy argument can be founded upon it.

Difficulty of the Subject.

The Effects of Moral Teaching not easily ascertained.

The truth is that moral training is chiefly an affair of personal influence, and that influence of this kind is a special gift. For example, Dr. Arnold had the gift in the supreme degree, but a man might be placed in control of the same educational machinery and yet be destitute of it.

Personal Influence.

However, some general truths may be taken note of, and they may help us to understand the subject so far as it can be said to be intelligible.

First, you require material to work upon in a national moral sense, and here I have just said that the

Necessity of a National Moral Sense.

English have the advantage. The moral sense is (on the whole and in spite of many exceptions) very much stronger in England than in France. The English (except their men of the world) still retain in a great degree the healthy state of moral feeling which is capable of being really shocked and horror-stricken by turpitude and vice; the French lose this freshness of feeling very early in life, and look upon turpitude and vice very much as an English man of the world looks upon them, as a part of the nature of things too familiar to excite surprise. It does not follow that they themselves are base and vicious, but they know too much, and they know it too early, about the evil side of life.

Want of Freshness of Feeling in France.

The English, too, have a great advantage in the possession of a national institution which exists far more for moral training than for anything else. The Church of England is much less of a theocracy than the Church of Rome, and much more of a moral influence over the ordinary laity. Its clergy are nearer to the laity than the Roman Catholic clergy are, and their influence is on the whole a more pervading and efficient influence. The great difficulty about the moral training of the young is that it can only be done well and efficiently by authority. Ecclesiastical institutions invest the teacher with this authority far better than any others. The clerical teacher, with the Church behind him, is free from the perplexing task of reasoning about morals; he has only to require obedience. His very costume separates him from all laymen, and gives a weight and seriousness to his teaching that they cannot impart to theirs. For this reason almost all parents, until recent years, have been anxious to place their children under the authority of priests, and have

Moral Influence of the Church of England.

Authority needed with the Young.

Value of Ecclesiastical Institutions.

Special Authority of the Clergy.

often done so when they themselves had no belief in theological doctrines. They did not seek the theocratic power, but the moral power that was connected with it.

The Difficulty of Clerical Education.

In course of time, however, a most formidable difficulty arises. Clerical education may be morally most beneficial, but it can only be so whilst the pupil himself is a sincere believer. If he is not, the effect of clerical education is not moral, but the contrary, as it compels him to learn the arts of dissimulation. The clergy do not say in plain terms that deceit and imposture are virtues; they class them, nominally, in the category of vices, but the intelligent pupil soon perceives that he is rewarded for practising them and punished for not practising them. "Many unbelievers," said a truthful Frenchman to me, "come out of our clerical seminaries, but the acquired habit of dissimulation remains with them, and they are never plain and straightforward in after life." Perhaps it may be said that I attach too much importance to truthfulness, that a certain degree of dissimulation is necessary in the world, and that it may as well be learned at school as in practical affairs. I only know that truthfulness is one of the social virtues, though it is often directly contrary to the interests of those who practise it. Being a social virtue, and favourable to public interests, it ought to be encouraged in public education. Now, it so happens, whether for good or evil, that the majority of French laymen of the educated classes are unbelievers, and I say that no moral purpose can be answered by bringing them up in habits of hypocrisy. I am told by those who are in a position to judge accurately, that is to say, by intelligent men who have lived all their lives in the University, that

Effect of it on Unbelievers.

Truthfulness especially a Social Virtue.

Unbelievers numerous in France.

Agnostics in the French University.

four out of every six professors are Agnostics, and that the proportion amongst the present generation of their pupils is even larger. Under these circumstances the idea of handing over the national University to the priests is inadmissible by any one who cares for liberty of conscience; and if the reader thinks that liberty of conscience is a luxury for Protestants only, and that Agnostics have no right to it, I cannot agree with him.

Liberty of Thought unfavourable to Moral Authority.

Incompatibility of Authority with Reasoning.

Unfortunately, however, it is found in practice that liberty of thought in religious matters not being itself founded upon authority, but on the exercise of individual reason, is unfavourable to moral authority, especially over the young. In fact, reason and authority are incompatible. We rule our children by authority when they are young, without stopping to reason; when they are grown up we endeavour to influence them by reason, but our authority, as such, has departed.

Principle of the Church of Rome.

The Church of Rome avoids this difficulty by founding all her teaching on authority. Even when she condescends to reason, every one knows that the principle of authority is behind and can be used, like a royal prerogative, to cut short discussion at any moment.

French Lay Teachers wanting in Authority.

Now, as a matter of simple fact, it must be admitted that the moral authority of French lay teachers is inadequate. They have not the power of the priests, nor even of the English clergy. And the consequence is that a new generation of Frenchmen is growing up under insufficient moral control. I make no attempt to disguise the evil, but cannot see how it was to have been avoided. It is an evil which lies before every country in Europe as the authority of religion becomes relaxed. Meanwhile, lay education, if not morally so strong as one might desire,

One Good Effect of Lay Education.

is at least producing a generation of young men who are frank and fearless, and have an unaffected contempt for sneaks and hypocrites of all kinds.

What is wanted is a class of lay principals with something like the moral authority of Dr. Arnold; but would Dr. Arnold have possessed that authority, or anything approaching to it, if he had been a layman?

Dr. Arnold.

I myself have known very intimately and for many years a French principal who would have delighted in exercising Arnold's power for good if he had possessed it, but he was a layman only, and did not possess it.

A French Principal.

In family life there may be a kind of sacerdotal authority in the head of the household when he exercises a sacerdotal function, when he compels his household to join him in family prayer and to listen respectfully whilst he reads and expounds the sacred books. The father assumes in that manner a moral authority that is not easily assumed in any other way.

Sacerdotal Authority in Family Life.

Still, in many French families, the father is anxious to do what he can, and this is one of his strongest reasons against clerical education in the ecclesiastical seminaries. The clerical teachers, in their desire to establish an uncontested religious influence over the boys, look upon the father and mother as rivals, and do not permit the boys to return home, except during the vacations, even when the parents live in the very town where the seminary itself is situated. In this way home influence is almost annihilated, and clerical influence substituted for it. But the moralising and civilising power of the home influence may be too precious to be sacrificed, and, as a matter of fact, when the children are educated by laymen, it is almost the only influence of that kind that remains. In

Clerical Jealousy of Family Influence.

Value of Home Influence.

France it is especially the mother who civilises boys. Lads who are too much shut up in the *lycées* may get what the French call "instruction," but they do not get what is called "education." The pupils imprisoned in the ecclesiastical seminaries acquire, certainly, an oily smoothness of manner and a much greater degree of docility than the *lycéens*, because they have been more thoroughly broken in.

Manners acquired in the Seminaries.

Home Influences undervalued in England.

In England the home influences are much undervalued. Wealthy English parents soon despair of doing anything themselves for the moral training of their children, so they "pack them off" to some distant school to be placed under the influence of masters whom they have never seen and of whom nothing is really known except that they are in holy orders. If an Englishman has been educated at home, or even near home, he is generally rather ashamed of it, and unless he is exceptionally forcible in after life he is likely to be despised for it. Still, the boy must be born in very unfortunate circumstances whose father and mother could not, if they chose, do more for his moral training than a schoolmaster who has perhaps fifty to attend to without the parental interest in any of them. The worst of the distant-school system is that it deprives the home residence that remains of all beneficial discipline, for the boys are guests during the holidays, and the great business is to amuse them. Then they go away to follow some profession, and the father, as he thinks over his fond dreams of companionship and paternal influence, may reckon (if the now useless calculation can still interest him) for how many months or weeks that influence has been directly operative in the whole course of his children's lives.

Parents and Schoolmasters.

Brief Duration of Paternal Influence

For this reason the English grammar schools, though despised because they are cheap and easily accessible to the middle classes, may have a better effect on the family life of the country than the fashionable public schools. The idea would be to get both good home education and good school education at the same time, especially when the parents have the luck to live in the country. Rural life is good for boys, both physically and mentally; it gives them a healthy interest in a thousand things, especially in a rudimentary kind of natural history, and it prevents them from acquiring the premature cynicism and sharpness that are amongst the most undesirable characteristics of young Parisians.

English Grammar Schools.

Benefits of Rural Life for Boys.

The root of the moral difficulty is that the natural world is non-moral, and the natural world is all we have to appeal to when the various forms of the supernatural have all equally been rejected. After that we may argue that morality, in the most comprehensive sense, is the only sound basis for human societies, and that all social interests are on the side of it. That, no doubt, is true, and it is a good subject for sound reasoning, but reason is not authority, it is only an attempt to persuade, and the boyish nature detests moral lecturing.

The Root of the Difficulty. The Natural World.

The Argument from Social Interests.

Boys, too, are sharp enough to perceive that all morality is abandoned by common consent in the dealings between nations. Both England and France have been thoroughly immoral in their dealings with weaker States, and in recent times Germany has shown herself no better. It is difficult to maintain fine moral theories in countries whose practice so openly contradicts them. Even the authoritative moral teaching of the English clergy, which may have had a good effect on the private lives of their

International Immorality.

The English Aristocracy.

Want of Rectitude in its Judgment of Foreigners.

pupils, has not given them anything like stern rectitude of judgment concerning foreigners; for the English aristocracy admired Louis Napoleon, certainly one of the lowest characters that ever existed. It was also entirely on the side of the immoral slave power in the United States.

The one great anxiety that torments thoughtful Englishmen, and still more thoughtful Frenchmen, in the present day, is the establishment of an accepted moral authority. I am able to perceive only one that might be efficacious, and that is a severe public opinion. It may be answered that public opinion exists already; and so no doubt it does, but chiefly to reward conformity and punish non-conformity in externals. We want a public opinion that would sustain and encourage every one in the practice of unostentatious virtues, especially in temperance, self-denial, and simplicity of life. As an example of what might be I may mention the French disapproval of debt. That is extremely strong, and as it is accompanied by the permission to live simply it does really operate as an effective restraint upon extravagance, at least in provincial life. The American disapproval of idleness, even in the rich, is another case in point, and in the English upper classes there is a general and salutary disapproval of everything that is held to be ungentlemanly. Notwithstanding what has been said in this chapter about the want of moral authority in laymen, they can effect something by combination. For example, military men are laymen, yet they keep up amongst themselves a splendid spirit of courage and self-sacrifice, and so do physicians and surgeons, with the addition of a manly charity and tenderness.

Value of Public Opinion.

French Disapproval of Debt.

American Disapproval of Idleness.

English Reprobation of what is Ungentlemanly.

Military Professional Virtue.

Medical Professional Virtue.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EDUCATION OF THE FEELINGS

JOHN MILL pointed out long ago the advantage that the French have in the cultivation of the feelings. This is very much an affair of utterance in language, for it is utterance which best keeps feelings alive. French sympathy is often, no doubt, assumed; that is inevitable where so much sympathy is expressed; still, it is certain that in France all true sympathy does get expressed, and in this way people live surrounded by an atmosphere in which feeling remains active. In England the national reserve and the sharp distinction of classes are both against the cultivation of feelings, but besides this there is the pride of stoicism, the fear of seeming soft. The Frenchman's love for his mother is ridiculous in England; in France it is only natural. In truth, perhaps, it is not so much the sentiment that is ridiculous for Englishmen as the association of it with French expressions. The English do not laugh at it in Latin. The affection of Euryalus for his mother is thought beautiful in the Æneid, but turn it into French and it comes in those very phrases that Englishmen cannot abide. "J'ai une mère issue de l'antique race de Priam, une mère infortunée qui a voulu me suivre et que n'ont pu retenir le rivage natal d'Ilion

Mill's Opinion on French Feeling.

English Stoicism. The Frenchman's love for his Mother.

Euryalus.

ni les mûrs hospitaliers d'Aceste. *Cette mère je la quitte sans l'instruire des dangers où je cours et sans l'embrasser. Non, j'en prends à témoin et la Nuit et votre main sacrée, je ne pourrais soutenir les larmes de ma mère. Mais vous, je vous en conjure, consolez-la dans sa douleur, soutenez-la dans son abandon.*" The words that I have italicised are so perfectly French that they might be quoted from the last yellow-backed novel. The warm promise of friendship from Ascanius is also excessively French in sentiment. "Pour toi, Euryale, dont l'âge se rapproche plus du mien, admirable jeune homme, dès ce jour mon cœur est à toi, et je t'adopte à jamais comme compagnon de ma fortune: sans toi je n'irai plus chercher la gloire, et, soit dans la paix, soit dans la guerre, ma confiance reposera sur ton bras et sur tes conseils." One young Englishman would never speak like that to another, he might possibly go so far as to say, "Hope you'll come back all right."

Ascanius and his Sentiments of Friendship.

Un-English.

Do the English suppress feeling, or have they no feeling to be suppressed? The true answer to this question cannot be a simple one. English usages have a tendency to prevent the expression of feeling where it exists, and therefore they are not favourable to the culture of the feelings, still these exist naturally as blades of grass will grow between the hard stones of a pavement. It must, however, be admitted that although in England a man of feeling may certainly live, the moral climate is not so favourable to him as it is to one who feels much less and is therefore hardier. The Englishman who is best constituted for life in his own country is one who has just feeling enough to keep him right in all matters of external duty, but not enough to make him very sym-

Effect of English Usages.

The best constituted Englishman.

pathetic, or to give him any painful craving for sympathy. If he is sympathetic he will offer his sympathy where it is not wanted, and be hurt by the chilling acceptance of it, and if he has the misfortune to crave for sympathy he will suffer. So it comes to pass that the tenderer natures try to harden themselves by an acquired and artificial insensibility, whilst those which are not very tender find the conditions of existence more suitable for them. I had collected a number of examples, but do not give them, because instances prove nothing, and because it would be so easy to affirm that my examples were not truly representative. I prefer to take another course, and to suggest to the reader, if he is familiar with English life, the idea of making a little investigation on his own account, by consulting his own recollections. First, as to family affections, the reader has probably met with many cases in which the paternal and filial relations were cool and rather distant, so that separation was not painful to either party. If he has observed brothers he may have seen them practically almost strangers, living far apart, in different spheres, and seldom, if ever, corresponding. He may have known cousins, even first cousins, who did not remember their relationship so far as to announce to each other the occurrences of marriages and deaths. He may have observed that a slight impediment of distance or occupation is sometimes enough to prevent a relation from coming to a funeral, and that the tombs of dead relations are sometimes left unvisited, uncared for, and untended. The reader may have noticed cases in which a difference of fortune produces a complete estrangement between very near relations, and finally he may have met with Englishmen who declared that friends were worth

Sympathy.

The tenderer Natures.

The Filial Relation in England.

The Fraternal.

Cousins.

Funerals.

Neglected Tombs.

Friends and Relations.

having because they could be selected, but that relations were a nuisance or "a mistake."

Absence of the Culture of the Affections in England.

Cases like these are very numerous in England, because the affections are left to the chances of accident; they are not sedulously cared for and cultivated. When they are of great strength naturally, and when the conditions happen to be very favourable, there is nothing to prevent their growth, but in less favourable conditions there is nothing to keep them alive. In France all very near relations write to each other when they cannot meet personally on their fête days, all friends write at least a line or two for the New Year, and acquaintances exchange cards. An intelligent Frenchman said to me, "Our culture of the family affections is sometimes insincere, we sometimes express sentiments which are assumed for the occasion, but, on the whole, our customs tend to keep alive the reality of affection as well as its appearance, by reminding us of our relations and friends and of our duties towards them."

Culture of the Affections in France.

Cause of the Difference.

What is the cause of this difference? Do the English really care less for each other than the French, or is there some hidden reason why they are less demonstrative?

English Shyness.

Due to a want of Culture.

There is one reason—the English shyness, the English fear of giving verbal utterance to feeling. Now, this is distinctly a want of culture, for the due expression of feeling is, in all the higher arts, one of the best results of culture. There can be no doubt that many Englishmen feel much more than they are able to express, and they certainly appreciate the power of utterance in others, as, for example, in their orators. A few Englishmen boldly go beyond and do express feeling, even in ordinary life, just as a few venture to talk like intellectual men. These

Exceptional Englishmen.

few are not uncommonly found among the clergy, at least it has been so in my experience; and this may be due to the culture which religion gives to feeling, and, in the clergy, to the practice gained by the utterance of it in sermons and exhortations. The Clergy.

The idea that feeling is a weakness, and that it is well to suppress it in the education of boys, is more in accordance with the opinion of the Red Indians than with that of the ancient Greeks. The best education would respect all natural and healthy sentiment, such as a boy's love for his mother, without ridiculing it, but would at the same time train the boy in the courage which has always been compatible with tenderness, ay, and even with tears. Amongst the services of an unobtrusive kind which Queen Victoria has rendered to the English, one of the best has been by setting an example of openness in matters of feeling. She has permitted her subjects to see what she felt on many occasions, and has done this simply, plainly, and without the dread of sneering depreciation. The same healthy influence is often exercised by women in narrower spheres. There is more than ever room for this feminine influence in an age like ours, when the positivism of the scientific and industrial temper, and the fierce competition amongst individual men, as well as between nations, are hardening the heart of the world. The due exercise and culture of the feelings are always appreciated at their right value in literature and the fine arts; it is a strange and striking anomaly that we fail to perceive their equal importance in the reality of life itself. The Best Education. Queen Victoria. Feeling appreciated in Art but not in Life.

There is one department of the culture of feeling in which the English are far superior to the French—that of

English Tenderness for the Lower Animals.

sympathy with the lower animals. The French are humane enough where human beings are concerned, but their humanity, as a rule, is confined to pity for the sufferings of their own species. There are exceptions, of course. I know several Frenchwomen who are full of sympathy for cats and dogs, and I have known French grooms who were thoughtful and kind and even affectionate in their treatment of horses; nevertheless, as a nation, the French are hard and pitiless in comparison with the English. All sentiments appear ridiculous when we do not share them, so the French laugh at English humanitarianism as the British critic laughs at a Frenchman's tenderness about his mother. My favourite French newspaper, the *Temps*, never misses an opportunity for a hit at this English eccentricity. French hardness dates from the time when the influence of the Church was universal; and, whether she taught the doctrine formally or not, her followers believed that animals, being unbaptized, had no rights. A dog or a horse is an infidel, and therefore cruelty to it is blameless. The decline of religious influence might have led one to hope for a broader charity, but there unhappily came the scientific spirit, which, though not cruel for the sake of cruelty, is heedless of animal suffering, and ready to inflict tortures on the lower animals worse than the torments of the Inquisition. So, in fact, the condition of the poor brutes has gone from bad to worse. There is, indeed, a French law for the protection of animals, but it is nearly a dead letter. The great practical difficulty in cultivating the feelings on this subject comes from the general but most unreasonable idea that there is something manly in being indifferent to the sufferings

French Hardness.

English Humanitarianism laughed at. The *Temps*.

Influence of the Church.

Animals are Infidels.

The Scientific Spirit.

*La Loi Grammont.*

of brutes, and something childish in having pity for them. I remember a French gentleman who considered himself strong-minded because he made his carriage horses work when they had raws. In the lower classes men are proud of overloading and of making their horses go over unreasonable distances.[1] In both countries men are ready to inflict pain on animals whenever they think that they can get pleasure out of it for themselves. The passions for sport and *gourmandise* are the two which come next after science for pitilessness. The infliction of wounds for amusement, and the boiling alive of lobsters, are common to England and France, but the following is, I believe, peculiarly French:—When we lived at Sens my wife discovered that it was the custom, when selling rabbits on the market-place, to put their eyes out with a skewer, from a belief that this cruelty improved the flavour.[2] I find that cooks are all convinced that boiling alive is necessary to the flavour of a lobster, and there is no reasoning with cooks and gourmands if they believe that cruelty heightens the delicacy of tortured flesh.

A French Gentleman and his Carriage Horses.

Sport and *Gourmandise.*

A Horrible Custom at Sens.

Amongst the sentiments that have been much cultivated in the past there is one which is less and less

The Sentiment of Reverence.

[1] French carters are superior to English in providing two-wheeled carts with breaks. I remember seeing the horses suffer very much for the want of them in steep roads and streets in England. The French, too, are usually very careful about balancing loads so as not to press heavily on the shaft-horse, but they are merciless in first overloading a cart and then beating the horse because the weight is beyond his strength.

[2] My wife had no rest till she had procured the abolition of this custom by an edict from the Mayor of Sens, but very likely it went on in private afterwards.

cultivated in modern France, the sentiment of reverence. The difficulty is to find objects for reverence that can effectually withstand the desecrating light of modern criticism. Good Catholics have still an object of veneration in the Pope and, in minor degrees, in the bishops and other priests; but since the death of the Count de Chambord there is not a single political personage left who excites veneration even in the mind of a royalist. The republicans venerate nobody, not even poor ex-president Grévy. Victor Hugo was, no doubt, regarded with veneration, but he has left no successor. Father Ingres was also really venerated by a certain sect of younger artists in his time. Chevreul, the centenarian, is respected for his achievements and for his hundred years. In this way two or three individuals in a century may excite some veneration, but the sentiment, outside of the Church, lacks continuity of culture. The true royalist sentiment is dead in France, the religious sentiment survives only in a part of the population, and is failing even there, whilst the French have not the vulgar veneration for titles which would at least exercise the faculty, though on low objects. Neither do the posts occupied by high officials under the Republic excite veneration in anybody. The royalists unanimously despise them, the republicans generally want to dismiss the present occupants and put other men in their places. In family life there is much affection certainly, and no doubt there is some respect, but there is no veneration. "Your sons," I said to an intelligent Frenchman, "treat you with much freedom. They do not seem to be in the least impressed by any idea of the paternal dignity." —"How can we expect them," he answered, "to be

Veneration of the Priests by Catholics.

Absence of Veneration in the Republican Party. Victor Hugo. Ingres.

Chevreul.

Extinction of Royalist Sentiment.

Want of Reverence for High Officials.

Absence of Veneration in Family Life.

deferential and reverential to us when we, on our part, have set them, on every possible occasion, the example of a want of reverence towards the beliefs and the institutions of our fathers? They have heard nothing but criticism from our lips, they have grown up in an age of criticism, when there is nothing for the faculty of veneration to cling to." In a word, veneration had never been exercised or developed in their minds.

Veneration in England. The Bible and the Throne. Houses of Parliament.

In England this sentiment is less cultivated than in former times, but there still remain the Bible and the Throne. The House of Commons does not inspire it, the House of Lords is more and more failing to inspire it.

Critical Writing.

The critical writing which is most keenly enjoyed is absolutely destitute of veneration. Looking to the future, a philosopher might ask himself whether the faculty was not destined to die out as having become useless. It is poetical, but it is not critical. When a poet does not feel it he feigns it; the critic knows that to approach a subject in a reverential spirit is to abdicate his own function.

Veneration in Poetry.

Effects of the want of Veneration in the Common People.

The misfortune is that when the common people cease to venerate they lose their interest in things. The fate of the Apocrypha is a significant illustration. The English no longer believe it to be inspired, they no longer venerate it, consequently they have ceased to read it. In France the Bible, for the same reason, is left unread by the Voltairean world. The old veneration for the Greek and Latin classics is passing away, and they will soon only be read by a few specialists.

Loss of Faith in the Classics.

The French are losing their faith in the classics, once so staunch, with a rapidity that astonishes even those who are most familiar with French impulses. That was the last-surviving religion in intellectual France, and it is moribund.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDUCATION AND RANK

FRANCE, being a more advanced democracy than England, has made greater efforts to bring secondary education within the reach of many, and the consequence is that such education, in that country, having ceased to be a mark of class, confers very little social position. The majority of French boys who learn Latin do it simply as a matter of business, the bachelor's degree being necessary to every physician and surgeon, to every barrister and notary, and even to every teacher of modern languages in the public schools. There are also examinations to be passed before practising pharmacy as a trade, and for that the examinations are not confined to the special science itself. In England the University degree is not absolutely required for the professions of law and medicine, and therefore it retains more of an ornamental character. It is more of an intellectual distinction and less of a matter of business than in France.

Education not a Mark of Class in France. Latin a Matter of Business.

Greater Value of English University Degrees.

To understand France in this and many other matters we must bear in mind that the whole tendency of modern French institutions is to produce, not what the English call the gentleman, but the middle-class man, or *bourgeois*, in enormous numbers. He is comfortably

Tendency of Modern French Institutions

The *Bourgeois*.

clothed, badly lodged, far too well fed, and educated in many studies, but not quite up to the point at which they would begin to be available for the intellectual life. The public schools where he gets this education are both too numerous in themselves and too numerously attended, besides being too cheap, for purposes of social distinction. All that education can do for a lad in France, at any school or college, is to place him in the *bourgeoisie*, that is to say, in the middle class. It does not, in the least, give him an approach to social equality with the aristocracy. Sons of peasants frequently rise in the *bourgeoisie* by means of University degrees; but that is not much, and there they stop. There is not any University degree, however elevated, not even the double doctorate, which is recognised by what is called "Society" as conferring any claim whatever to come within its pale.[1]

What Education can do in France.

Degrees and Society.

In England the choice of school and University has an immense influence on a boy's future social position. Educate him at a grammar school or send him to Eton and Oxford, the difference to his future rank will be enormous. If an English mother has a son at Eton she is sure to let you know. All English people associate the idea of class distinctions with the different English schools, and they have an almost insuperable difficulty in realising the condition of things in France, where there is neither an Eton nor an Oxford, nor anything in the least degree resembling them from the social point of view. In this way the English are always wrong about the

Choice of School and University in England. Eton and Oxford.

English always wrong about French *Lycées*.

[1] The University decorations of *Officier de l'Instruction Publique* and *Officier d'Académie* confer no social position. The fellowship of the University confers none either outside of the University itself.

French *lycées*, because they begin by imagining the English class distinctions. The prevalent English idea about them is that they are low and cheap places. One English writer accepted it as evidence of the very humble origin of a distinguished Frenchman that he had been educated in a *lycée*. He could not realise the simple fact that the *lycées* have nothing to do with social rank *either one way or the other*. My brother-in-law was educated at a *lycée*, and one of his ordinary class-fellows was a prince who is now actually reigning; other class-fellows may have been sons of small shopkeepers or poor clerks. Older Frenchmen are still living who were class-fellows of the Orleans princes at the *lycée Henri IV*. The princes worked like the others, and it was only thought a proof of their father's good sense that he sent his boys to one of the best schools in the town where he lived, though he happened to be King of the French. It was good for them, but it made no difference to the others, nor to the school. King Milan of Servia was afterwards educated at the same *lycée*.

The Simple Fact.

Princely and Humble *Lycéens*.

Education of the Orleans Princes.

A boy gains no rank, and loses none, by being at a French *lycée*. It is true that the reactionary aristocracy looks upon the *lycées* with disfavour, but that is not because they are cheap,[1] or because some of the pupils are poor, for the aristocracy is willing to send its children to priestly seminaries, which are still cheaper, and where

Views of the Reactionary Aristocracy.

[1] The reason for the cheapness of the *lycées* is because they are not intended to be paying concerns (deficits being filled up by the State), and because the pupils benefit by the wholesale scale of all purchases, on which, of course, no profit is made. The buildings, being supplied by the towns and the State, are rent free. Some of the newer ones are magnificent. The *Lycée Lakanal*, near Paris, cost £400,000, and is a model of practical modern arrangement.

most of the pupils are poorer. The reasons are not social, but religious and political. The *lycées* have lay masters, the seminaries have priests; the *lycées* are animated with a republican spirit, the seminaries are royalist. Everything has a political colour in France. When a young noble has not been to a seminary he is educated on its principles by a clerical tutor at home, or else in some Jesuit school abroad.

Religious and Political Reasons.

Not only does the place of education give no social position to a Frenchman, but education itself now gives him very little, because it has been made accessible to poor men. Eton and Oxford are respected because they are expensive;—if the same education, or a better, were given in cheap schools, it would lose its social significance. France seems to have reached, or almost reached, that point towards which the whole world is tending, when education will be too common to confer rank, and it is even possible we may get back to the middle-age idea that it is lordly to be illiterate. Even now, something of this sentiment is distinctly perceptible in France. Clever young men in the middle class are considered to be working creditably for persons in their line of life, but the nobility do not meet them on that ground; they outshine them, not in learning, but in field-sports and equipages.

Education itself gives little Position in France.

Revival of the Middle-age Idea.

The Brilliant Nobility.

A refined way of speaking the native language does something for social position in England. English people say of a man, "He has a good accent, he speaks like a gentleman;" in France so many middle-class people speak well habitually that pure speech has almost ceased to be a distinction. Even if the men had not broken down that barrier,' clever Frenchwomen would have

The Native Language.

removed it. How many of them have I met with, in the middle classes, who, for enunciation, articulation, readiness and accuracy of expression, and precision of accent, spoke quite as well as ladies of rank! This, too, in a country where clear, and prompt, and accurate speaking is valued and appreciated to a degree unknown in England. It is only the most cultivated English people who dare to employ, in conversation, the full powers of their noble tongue; the others shrink from the best use of it, and accustom themselves to forms of speech that constitute, in reality, a far inferior language, in which it is so difficult to express thought and sentiment that they are commonly left unexpressed.[1]

Clever French-women in the Middle Classes.

Rare Use of the Best English.

Passing from ordinary education to that higher culture which can only be attained by a sedulous attachment to intellectual pursuits in mature life, I should say that here, again, mental elevation has nothing to do with social rank. In France the time is at hand, if it has not already arrived, when high culture may be taken as evidence that its possessor does not belong to the aristocracy. Speaking for the present of France only, I may offer two or three reasons in explanation of this curious anomaly. The French aristocracy, disdaining all work that is remunerative, does not enter the professions, and so misses the culture that the professions give. But, beyond this, the French aristocracy is unaccustomed to work of any kind, and as culture is usually unattainable without work, and

Culture *versus* Rank.

French Aristocracy unaccustomed to work.

[1] An English friend of mine, himself a man of the very highest culture, says that the cultivated English keep their talk down to a low level from a dread of the watchful jealousy of their intellectual inferiors. They only dare venture to talk in their own way between themselves in privacy.

as there is not even a high standard of early education in that aristocracy, it passes its time in ways that do not tend to culture except so far as polite and graceful social intercourse favours it. If the reader wishes to be just he will not think of the minor French rural aristocracy as "a class of rakes," but as a very numerous class of more or less wealthy idlers, living half the year on their estates, four months in some country town, and a month or two at Paris or the sea-side. Their life is healthy and natural for the most part, and they often attain a great age; but they are, as a class, much more addicted to rural sports than to intellectual or artistic pursuits of any kind. There are exceptions, of course, yet even the exceptions suffer from the benumbing influence of their surroundings, and usually stop short of any noteworthy attainment. I may repeat in this place a remark made to me by an observant Frenchman. He said, "In our country the men who cultivate themselves with effect are more frequently retired tradesmen than men born to independence. The retired tradesman has habits of industry which he applies to any pursuit that he takes up, and the want of these habits is fatal to the aristocrat." Another Frenchman, himself a man of culture, coincided, quite independently, with Matthew Arnold's well-known description of another aristocracy. "It is a strange result of the wealth and intelligence of the modern world," he said, "to give the upper classes the pursuits of the savage without the necessity which is his excuse for them. Our country gentlemen are not our intellectual leaders, they live a sort of perfected barbaric life. They are barbarians armed with the complicated appliances of civilisation. Their greatest glory is to have killed a large number of

Character of the French Rural Aristocracy.

Intellectual Industry of some Retired Tradesmen.

Barbarians in the Upper Classes.

Devotion to Barbaric Sports.

big wild boars, and they exhibit the heads as trophies.

Contempt for Trade and Commerce.

Another savage characteristic is that they despise trade and commerce, and consider all professions beneath them except that of the warrior. Their ideas of government by the simple authority of a despotic chief are also those of primitive man; they have not patience to endure the delays and the complicated action of parliamentary institutions. In a word, the liberty that wealth gives in the modern world means for them the liberty of the primæval instincts."

Liberty of Primæval Instincts.

# PART II

## PATRIOTISM

# CHAPTER I

## PATRIOTIC TENDERNESS

THE tender feeling of patriotism, as distinguished from the proud, is more general in France than in England, and it has increased in France during the last twenty years, whilst it has diminished in England in the course of a generation, or during the transition from one generation to another.

Tenderness has increased in France and diminished in England.

This difference and these changes are due to causes that may easily be seen in operation. We may be able to fix upon some of them, and whilst we are so occupied the reader is especially requested to bear in mind that the tenderness of patriotism is not the whole of patriotism, and that the Englishman who has little tenderness may be as patriotic in other ways as the Frenchman who has more.

Causes of the Difference.

Tender patriotism in all cases attaches itself to the soil; it is an affection for the soil, and at first an affection for particular localities, generally with recognisable characteristics. One of the first effects of it is to produce a feeling of foreignness with regard to other parts of the same nation, so that by its particularism it may seem almost anti-patriotic.

Local.

"I will never leave Borva," said the Princess of

The Princess of Thule

Thule, yet she did leave Borva, and sang her old island songs in the strange land and amongst the strange people "with her heart breaking with thoughts of the sea, and the hills, and the rude, and sweet, and simple ways of the old island life that she had left behind her."

Here is an example of tender patriotism, so much localised that the lover of her own country, which is one of the Hebridean islands, feels herself a foreigner in London, and it might be argued that every British subject ought to feel at home in the capital of the nation. Well, we are coming to that, but the first patriotism is local and pathetic.[1] No English novelist understands the sentiment of patriotic tenderness better than does William Black, and he always represents it as strongest in poor and thinly-peopled places, such as are to be found in the Western Highlands, and in the bleak archipelago between the Scottish mainland and the open Atlantic.

William Black. His understanding of Patriotic Tenderness.

Rural Life favourable to Tenderness.

Country life is highly favourable to the growth of a tender local patriotism, especially that kind of country life which remains stationary and attached to family possessions. Small estates are favourable to it, large estates less so, because they supply their owners with the means of living at a distance, and especially for passing a part of the year in the capital, and other months out of the country altogether.

[1] I can speak from experience on this matter, having had in youth an intensely strong local affection for the wilder parts of northern England, a feeling that afterwards extended itself to Scotland, but I remember that when this feeling was strongest, the midland and southern counties were quite like a foreign country to me—a very dull, uninteresting foreign country—and I had no home feeling whatever in London, nor any desire to revisit it.

Colonisation is unfavourable to a tender English patriotism, because it diverts the affection of families from the soil of the mother country by giving them a second country beyond the sea, and by encouraging the idea that the mother country is but a part of a vast confederation, in which the colonists may have a patriotic feeling for the confederation generally, and a specially affectionate patriotism for the State or province in which they were born.

Colonisation Unfavourable.

When the State is very heterogeneous in composition, including several very different nationalities, there may be a tender sentiment in each nation for itself, but this is not likely to extend to the entire State. Thus, a Scotchman may have a tender feeling for Scotland, an Irishman for Ireland, but their tender affection is not likely to include England, still less Canada and Australia. They may be proud of belonging to so great an empire, but that is another feeling.

Composite States.

Every influence that increases the sensibility of the feelings is likely to increase the tenderness of patriotic sentiment. Religion and poetry are both strong influences in its favour, and a very powerful constant influence is that of a society in which feeling is habitually expressed as it is by the Irish and the French. A society in which the utterance of deep feeling of any kind is repressed by conventional good breeding, and by a kind of external stoicism, is repressive of tenderness in patriotic sentiment. This stoical tendency in the English is more favourable to pride than to love.

Effects of Religion and Poetry.

Utterance of Feeling.

Its Stoical Repression.

Habits of travel, habits of living abroad, cosmopolitan experiences on a large scale, diminish the intensity of local affection by affording opportunities for comparison,

Habits of Travel.

and so destroying illusions, especially about the grandeur of landscapes that have been dear to us in youth, and the appearance of houses and towns. After the Alps the English mountains are seen to be only hills, after Paris the northern towns look dismal.

Prosperity, Commercial and Political.

Lastly, a sustained commercial and political prosperity is unfavourable to the tenderness of national sentiment, because a very prosperous nation does not appeal to the pathetic sympathies, does not call for commiseration. The sons of a powerful and rich mother do not feel themselves to be so necessary to her as if she were afflicted and sorrowful.

Effects of these Causes in Modern England.

The reader will see at a glance how all these reasons against the tenderness of sentiment in patriotism tell in modern England.

Lack of small Proprietors.

England is not a country of small proprietors. Without committing the mistake, so common amongst foreigners, of believing that there are no small landowners in England, we know that they are not so numerous as in France, and therefore that the intense local affection of the peasant has fewer chances of developing itself.

The Population not Stationary.

Again, the population of England is less and less a stationary population, it becomes constantly more urban and more migratory. The lower and middle classes change their place of residence with a facility unknown to the yeomanry of former times. It seems to be a matter of indifference to them whether they will live in one ugly and smoky street or in another ugly and smoky street, and why indeed should we expect their affections to take root in a "wilderness of bricks"? Nor do they limit themselves to the same town. They change towns almost as easily as streets on the slightest prospect of

Facility in changing Residence.

increased income, and often merely for the sake of the change itself, to break the monotony of a life destitute of local interests and local attachments. In its extreme development the facility in removing that characterises the modern Englishman of the unsettled class will include not merely the United Kingdom, but the most remote dependencies of the British Empire. The following is a case well known to me; it is given here as an extreme case, not as an average one, but it is thoroughly English, and most remote from the stay-at-home habits of the French.

History of an English middle-class Family.

A middle-class Englishman in a scientific profession began by going to Scotland in his youth, and there he married early. From Scotland he emigrated to New Zealand, and thence to Australia, where he prospered well, but in the midst of his prosperity he determined to return to Great Britain. He settled first in Glasgow, and afterwards migrated successively to Hull, Bristol, Cardiff, Southampton, Liverpool, and London. I pass over a temporary residence in the United States. When staying in one town it was his habit to change his residence frequently. During the thirty or forty years of his married life he made twice as many removals. Since his death his family have gone on in the same way: they are constantly changing their addresses, and are dispersed over the British possessions, including New Zealand, Canada, and British Columbia. A family of this kind is not cosmopolitan, because it confines itself to English-speaking countries, but its world is the vast area over which the English language is known. There was a condition of feeling in that family quite incompatible with old-fashioned local attachments. The members of

Constant Changes of Address.

Condition of Feeling incompatible with Local Attachments.

it were ready at any time to leave England and each other and pitch their temporary camp in distant latitudes. This readiness was reflected in their conversation, which ranged easily over vast spaces of land and sea.

I began by saying that this was an extreme instance, and so it is, but there are thousands of others that show the English facility of removal in minor degrees. Nothing is more characteristic of the English, or more unlike the French, than the courage to go and settle in some place where they know nobody and with which they have no previous associations. French people do it when forced by necessity, but they do it with a sad heart; English people of their own free will have the courage to sever old ties and begin new experiments of life.

English Courage in Emigration.

The extreme readiness of the modern English to change their residence is a recently-developed characteristic. It has grown with the modern facilities of communication. Sons and daughters disperse and settle anywhere. In wealthy families the eldest son retains possession of the paternal home, but seldom steadily settles down to live in it, whilst his brothers and sisters scatter themselves over the counties. The affectionate prejudices of local patriotism have given place to a broader national patriotism which, in its turn, is even now giving way to a still more comprehensive Imperial patriotism. It is a change by which the English have gained in grandeur of conception what they have lost in tenderness of feeling.

A Recent Characteristic.

Local, National, and Imperial Patriotism.

Amongst the nations under the British crown there is one that still retains that tenderness in perfection. The Irish people have it, and they even keep it in exile. The reason evidently is that Ireland is a small well-defined

Irish Tenderness.

nation, separated from England by salient national characteristics, and a nation which for a long time has been poor, unhappy, and ill-used. Here are all the influences that increase the pathetic tenderness of patriotic feeling. If ever Ireland becomes rich and happy her patriotism may be quite as powerful, quite as genuine, but it will lose that intense pathos.[1] The pathetic element in Scottish patriotism was most intense when Scotland was poor, when the science and industry of her sons had not yet compensated for the barrenness of her soil.

Pathetic Feeling and its Causes.

Pathetic Element in Scottish Patriotism.

Of all the English poets Wordsworth had the tender local affections in the greatest strength; and in his case not only did they attach themselves to a small district

Wordsworth.

[1] It is needless to quote Moore, but the reader may thank me for stealing for his benefit a short lyric by an Irish poet, Mr. Robert Joyce, which is full of the tender sentiment of patriotism, associating love and death in the most touching manner with the often-repeated name of one Irish valley—Glenara.

An Irish Poet.

I

O, fair shines the sun on Glenara,
And calm rest his beams on Glenara;
But O! there's a light
Far dearer, more bright,
Illumines my soul in Glenara—
The light of thine eyes in Glenara.

II

And sweet sings the stream of Glenara,
Glancing down through the woods like an arrow;
But a sound far more sweet
Glads my heart when we meet
In the green summer woods of Glenara,—
Thy voice by the wave of Glenara.

III

And O! ever thus in Glenara,
Till we sleep in our graves by Glenara,
May thy voice sound as free
And as kindly to me,
And thine eyes beam as fond in Glenara,
In the green summer woods of Glenara!

with a marked peculiarity of character, but they were almost invariably associated with poor and simple human lives, themselves rooted by hereditary affection in the miniature highland region that occupies the north-west corner of England. London, to Wordsworth, was "a crowded solitude."

Attachment to Foreign Places.

No race in Europe has so strong a tendency as the English race to form attachments for places outside of the native land. This tendency has increased with the habit of travel and with the spoiling of England by modern industrial works. The second love of Englishmen is Switzerland if they are mountaineers, and Italy if they care for poetry and art. France they seldom appreciate unless they are architectural students, when they cannot overlook "the most architectural country in Europe." It is probable that no Englishman ever loved France as Robert Browning loves Italy, or would venture to express such a sentiment if he felt it.

English love for Switzerland.

Indifference to France. Love of Italy.

'Italy, my Italy!"

cries the poet with a passionate longing—

"Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it Italy,
Such lovers old are I and she,
So it always was, so shall ever be."

The love of a foreign language is enough to give us a friendly interest in the country where it is spoken to perfection, and as Englishmen are better linguists than the French, foreign countries have this attraction for them. They are also better scholars, and therefore may be more drawn towards Greece.

The Attraction of Greece for Englishmen.

Some Frenchmen have this second love, and when

they feel nostalgia for any land out of France it is sure to be Algeria or Italy. Frenchmen never have any local affections in England. They may keep a grateful recollection of English houses where they have been kindly received, but have never any delight in England as a country. Their prejudices against its climate and about the absence of taste and art are ineradicable.

The French love Algeria or Italy.

The love that the French have for France is associated with many innocent illusions. They believe it to be the only perfectly civilised country in the world, the home of all the arts, of all scientific and intellectual culture. Of late years France is to the republicans the one country where political and religious liberty is complete. It is, of course, the land where French people feel most at home, where they can most readily get the superfluities which are necessary to them—the elaborately-ordered and complete repasts, the abundant fruits, the varied drinks, the talk in the *café*, the lively and pointed newspaper articles that they can understand at a glance, the clever plays that they listen to with such rapt attention. Those Frenchmen who believe in a Providence think that it has specially favoured their own country. "*Dieu protège la France.*" Before the phylloxera came He gave his Frenchmen wine and refused it to the canting English, before the German invasion He gave them the intoxicating wine of victory. They have marvellous illusions about their climate; they think of it as a

Love of the French for France.

Illusions.

France the Pet of Providence.

> "Fair clime where every season smiles
> Benignant."

They have a full and fair appreciation of the beauty of their own country, and the more cultivated take an

intelligent interest in the still numerous architectural remnants of the past. They have not forgotten the old provincial names, nor suffered them to fall into disuse; the Burgundian is still a Burgundian, though not the less a Frenchman too. Even the towns have an adjective for their inhabitants which strengthens the local tie. The inhabitant of Sens is a *Senonais*, of Poitiers a *Pictovien*, of Gap a *Gavot*. In this way a Frenchman is the son of his native town, as an Oxonian of the University. The local feeling descends even to the villages—

Provincial Names.

Urban Names.

Village Patriotism.

> "*Rien n'est plus beau que mon village*
> *En vérité je vous le dis.*"

This provincial feeling is not so strong in England. In the United Kingdom we have the four different nationalities, but in England only the counties, which answer to the French departments. England has no living tradition of historical provinces. We learn about ancient divisions in history, and that is all.

The words used in the two countries are in themselves an indication of the state of feeling. The word *pays*, as employed by journalists and politicians for the whole of France, is exactly equivalent to "the country" as employed by English politicians; but the word *pays*, as it is employed by a French peasant to mean locality to which he is bound by ties of birth and affection, has no equivalent in English, and it cannot be translated without a phrase. To get the force of it I must explain that it is a part of the country to which I and my family belong. But the greatest difference in language is the entire absence, in English, of any word having the peculiar emotional value, the sacredness, of *patrie*. The word *patrie* is reserved

The Word. *Pays.*

The Sacred Word *Patrie.*

entirely for emotional use, it is *never* employed for common purposes. "Country" fails as an equivalent because it is used in various non-emotional senses, as when a minister appeals to the country by general elections, a huntsman rides across country, a gentleman's residence is situated in a pretty country, a townsman goes to live in the country, a landowner is a country squire. Here the word stands for the everyday words *pays* and *campagne*, but *patrie* never stands for anything but the land that we should be ready to die for, and it is never used without visible or suppressed emotion.[1] The English are themselves fully aware of the power of a word, and of all that may be indicated by the possession of a word. They are proud, with just reason, of the word "home," and think that the absence of it in the French language shows a want of tenderness of domestic sentiment in the French mind. The absence of any equivalent for *patrie* may indicate a like want of tenderness in the patriotic sentiment.

"Country" not an Equivalent.

Home.

Happily the English have not for many centuries been educated by the kind of experience most favourable to tenderness in patriotism. Their country has not been invaded. No Englishman knows what it is to have foreign soldiers ruling irresistibly in his own village and in his own home. No Englishman has seen his corn trampled by an enemy's cavalry, or his fruit-trees cut for fuel. In default of this experience no Englishman can imagine the sense of cruel wrong to their country that men feel when its sacred soil is violated.[2] The attempt

Want of Cruel Experience in England.

The Sacred Soil.

[1] During the Franco-German war I knew French people who could not utter the word "*Patrie*" with dry eyes.

[2] During and after the invasion the intensity of the patriotic

to imagine it for the French only takes him from feeling to reason. He sees clearly that the French would have done as much on German soil had they been able to reach it, and from a reasonable point of view he perceives that no earthly soil is sacred. But the tender sentiment of patriotism, like other tender sentiments, is not amenable to reason.

Varying Intensity of Patriotic Sentiment.

sentiment was always in exact proportion to the harm done by the invader. It was very feeble where he did not appear, and stronger in proportion to the duration of his presence and the harm that he inflicted. It is still intense in Alsatia and Lorraine, and especially intense in the French who have been expelled from those provinces.

## CHAPTER II

### PATRIOTIC PRIDE

IN the first chapter I indicated certain causes which make the patriotic sentiment less tender in England than in France. The same causes make English patriotism prouder than French patriotism.

Pride in old French Patriotism.

The element of pride was once intensely strong in French patriotism. Before the Franco-German war the Frenchman was as proud of his nationality as an ancient Roman; he sincerely believed his country to be *La Grande Nation*, and supposed that all the other peoples of the world must be humbly conscious of an immense inferiority. France, he believed, or rather he *knew*, was at the head of all nations both in arts and arms, the most military of countries, the most artistic, the most scientific —in all things and in all ways the greatest, the most illustrious, the best. I remember a conversation that took place in the spring of 1870 between two Frenchmen, a German, and myself. The Frenchmen were both scholarly and thoughtful men, immensely superior to the average of their countrymen, yet the old superstition about Gallic superiority was so inveterate in them that they maintained it at all points. The German and I ventured to doubt the absolute supremacy of France in

*La Grande Nation.*

Immense Superiority of France.

A Talk in 1870.

literature and art, on which our French friends fell back upon a quality which they affirmed to be beyond question, their undoubted military superiority. I remember the quiet, scarcely articulate protest of the German. He said that the military superiority of France, if put to the test *then* (1870) might not be quite so certain as in former times, as the Germans had made progress in the art of war. The French would not hear about the possibility of defeat; the incomparable *élan* of the troops, the well-known *furia francese*, was sure to carry everything before it.

Former Faith in Military Superiority.

Those were the last days of the pride of patriotism in France. Since 1870 no human being has heard any boasting of that kind from French lips.

End of French Patriotic Pride.

Before 1870 all French people had the sense of perfect security within their own frontier. They might send troops abroad, but at home they felt as secure as the English in their island. The sense of patriotic pride requires that feeling of security within the frontier, as much as the pride of wealth requires the sense of security from bailiffs. When the enemy is in possession, and the national forces are manifestly impotent to drive him out, there can be no national pride. There may be infinite devotion, and the most pathetic tenderness, but "*il n'y a pas lieu d'être fier.*"

The Feeling of Security necessary to it.

Since their disaster the only pride of the French has been in their self-restraint, and in the quiet perseverance with which they have reconstituted their army. Such pride as there may be in these efforts is of a subdued nature, and altogether different from the boasting of other days. It may be admitted that the national character has been immensely improved by the extinction of the old sentiment, and even the French intellect has

Improvement of French National Character.

gained by it in the clearer perception of truth, as a private misfortune often opens the eyes of a family. The change in the national character of the French has been clearly manifested by their patience and prudence on several very trying occasions. They used to be rash and light-headed, they have become cool, wary, and circumspect; at one time they were reputed to be fond of war, and were easily led into it by any temporary ruler, but to-day they look on war so dispassionately, they treat it so purely as a matter of reason, that they will resort to it only with all chances in their favour. Men of sixty say that the young men of the present day have far less of national sentiment than they had in their own youth, which may be explained by the want of aliment for national pride. A new generation has grown up, and it has grown up in humiliation. A Frenchman of twenty-five has seen Alsatia and Lorraine in the hands of the Germans ever since he knew anything of geography.

Change from Rashness to Prudence.

Humiliation.

Another heavy blow to national pride in the higher classes has come from the internal, and probably final, victory of the democracy. All who belong in any way to the French aristocracy, or who aspire to belong to it, and have sympathy with it, feel as much humiliated by the establishment of republicanism as by the German conquest. The aristocracy has been doubly overthrown, by foreign armies and by the multitude of voters. A French noble cannot go to any court in Europe without meeting the accredited representative of a *régime* that he abhors, and he cannot enter the French parliament without seeing republicans in office. It is true that the men in office are frequently changed, but the principle that put them there does not change; they are replaced by others not less democratic.

Victory of Democracy.

Double Defeat of the French Aristocracy.

England Free from these Wounds.

England is free from these wounds to her pride. No foreigner occupies any English territory. To have the equivalent of the French patriotic humiliation, five or six English counties would have to be occupied by an enemy, and a huge foreign fortress and arsenal, on English ground, would be constantly threatening London. With regard to internal causes of humiliation for the upper classes, they would feel what the French gentry feel if the monarchy and the House of Lords were abolished, and the Methodist, Baptist, and Jewish religions were established equally with the Church of England. This, then, is the great difference between the English and the French in this matter of national pride. There are existing causes which make that sentiment impossible, for the present, in France; there is no existing cause to prevent it from flourishing in the minds of Englishmen.

Imagined Changes in England.

England the Head of a Family.

The English have a motive for pride which is unknown to their French neighbours. They are the leading nation in a family of nations. They feel superior to the Americans of the United States by antiquity and by priority of civilisation, and they believe themselves to be their superiors in culture and in manners. Besides these differences, which may be more or less imaginary, it is obvious that aristocratic Englishmen must look down upon American democracy, since they look down, impartially, upon all democracies. The English living in England have a superiority of position over their own colonies, and are surprised to learn from Mr. Froude that a high degree of civilisation is to be found at the Antipodes. There are two opposite ways of thinking about the colonies that give equal aliment to the pride of an Englishman. He may have something like Mrs.

Feeling towards American Democracy.

Jameson's first impression of Canadian society, as "a small community of fourth-rate half-educated or uneducated people, where local politics of the meanest kind engross the men, and petty gossip and household cares the women," and in that case the superiority of England must be incontestable, or he may adopt the views of Mr. Froude, and then reflect what a great thing it is for England to be the first amongst the highly-civilised English-speaking communities. He is, besides, under no necessity to cross the ocean for subjects of comparison. He feels himself easily superior to the Scotch and Irish, and until recent agitations he had almost forgotten the very existence of the Welsh. All Scotch people know that the English, though they visit Scotland to admire the lochs and enjoy Highland sports, are as ignorant about what is essentially national in that country as if it were a foreign land. Ireland is at least equally foreign to them, or was so before the burning question of Home Rule directed attention to Irish affairs. This ignorance is not attributable to dulness. It has but one cause, the pride of national pre-eminence, the pride of being the first amongst the English-speaking nations of the world.

Mrs. Jameson's Impression of Canadian Society.

The Englishman's Superiority to the Scotch and Irish.

His Ignorance of Scotland.

Patriotic pride derives constantly renewed strength from a certain mental habit, which may grow upon a nation as it frequently does upon an individual. A man may get into the habit of despising, he may get into the habit of rating what others possess and what others do at an estimate below the truth. It is an indirect way of exalting without over-estimating himself, and therefore is pleasing to natures that are neither boastful nor vain, yet are firmly tenacious of pre-eminence. Now, although the English are said to be a deferential people, and have,

The Habit of despising.

The English a Contemptuous People.

no doubt, the habit of deference for certain distinctions, they are at the same time an eminently contemptuous people, even within the limits of their own island. Their habit of contempt is tranquil, it is without vaunt and without vanity, but it is almost constant, and they dwell with difficulty in that middle or neutral state which neither reverences nor despises. Consequently, when there is not some very special reason for feeling deference towards a foreigner, the Englishman is likely to despise him. The same mental habit causes the English, as a nation, to underrate habitually the strength and intelligence of other nations, without much overrating their own. The common Englishman thinks nothing of the French navy, hardly believes that the French can build or manage a ship of war, although the French navy is, in reality, the second in the world, and a good second; but the English do not overrate their own navy, on the contrary, they are very much alive to its deficiencies and defects. The common Englishman under-estimates French wealth, he does not think much of wealth that can be expressed in francs, yet at the same time he does not over-estimate the wealth of England. This tendency to despise others is shown in a peculiarly dangerous way by the English when they go to war. At such times they almost invariably under-estimate the strength of the antagonist and the difficulty of the enterprise, thus imposing needless hardships on the inadequate little force that begins the war.

The English underrate other Nations.

English do not overrate Themselves.

English underrate even the Forces of Nature.

The habit of despising and under-estimating is shown by the English, not only with regard to other nations, but in face of the natural forces themselves. They are very averse to taking precautions against danger, they have to

be forced to it by law, and when the law is made, it is likely to become a dead letter. A notorious instance of this is the eternal inadequacy of the provision for saving life every time a ship founders. It is, in all things, strongly characteristic of Englishmen to apply to every great or little thing they have to do the minimum of necessary effort. This is only another expression of their tendency to despise an opposing force.

French less disposed to Respect and Contempt.

The French, on the other hand, are generally less disposed both to the feelings of respect and contempt. They look upon the world with an easier indifference, not much respecting anybody or anything, but they are ready enough to acknowledge the merits and qualities of people and things that are not the best. The French are severe critics only where there is great pretension; they regard ordinary, unpretending people and things with a good-humoured indulgence. When there is much pretension, their levelling instinct makes them ready *debellare superbos*. It is a remarkable proof of the substantial strength of Victor Hugo's reputation that a man of such immense vanity, such prodigious pretension, should have been able to get himself taken at his own estimate in France. Napoleon III., although he had at his disposal the theatrical machinery of imperial state, was never able to win any real deference.

Their Levelling Instinct.

Victor Hugo.

Napoleon III.

French Feeling.

If the French are not contemptuous, it may be asked what is their feeling towards other nations, what is the form that national hostility takes in their case? When an Englishman despises, how does a Frenchman express international antagonism? The answer has been already given by Prince Bismarck in a celebrated speech. He said that the French hated their neighbours, that they

Accurately described by Bismarck.

hated the English and Italians as they hated the Germans. That is an accurate account of French sentiment towards neighbouring countries, except that, for the present, the hatred of the foreigner is more actively directed against Germany. The most trifling international incident is enough to awaken furious animosity in the French press against the English or the Italians. This may be a reason why the French cannot form durable alliances, especially with their neighbours. Their present attempt to ally themselves with Russia may be more fortunate, precisely because Russia is *not* a neighbour.

## CHAPTER III

### PATRIOTIC JEALOUSY

THE condition of things that most readily produces jealousy between rivals is a near approximation to equality, provided that the equals are very few in number, and that each of them has substantial claims to eminence. Conditions that excite Jealousy.

All the necessary conditions unite to produce jealousy between France and England. They have been the two greatest of European nations, they are still the most ancient of the Great Powers, and the most advanced in the arts of civilisation. Their weight and influence in Europe are very nearly the same. Their populations approximate very closely, France, in round numbers, having about thirty-eight inhabitants to thirty-seven in the United Kingdom. As to European territory they are unequal, but the larger home territory of France is compensated by the larger colonial territory of England. Both are great naval Powers. As if to sharpen their feelings of rivalry, the two greatest naval Powers in the world hold the shores of a narrow channel, where each may see the warships of the other. England has a great naval superiority, but she needs it to protect her commerce and her colonies. In like manner the superior military strength of France is occupied in the defence of her land frontier. Both Present in the Case of France and England. Rivals in Europe. Rivals in Naval Strength.

Both nominally Powers of the First Class.

England and France are nominally Powers of the first class, yet neither is exactly so in reality, the proof being that neither the one nor the other dare venture, without an ally, to measure herself against either Germany or Russia.

Their near Equality in Wealth.

In wealth they are more nearly equal than any other two countries in the world. The system of government, though under different names, is practically the same in both countries, being representative in both, with power in the lower chamber and responsible cabinets.

Political Liberty.

In each of the two countries political liberty is as nearly complete in practice as recent experiments in democracy will permit.

Aristocracy and the People.

In both there is a contest between the aristocracy and the people.

Religious Policy.

An increasingly liberal religious policy in both France and England has led to the equal toleration of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, though in neither country, as yet, is there anything like a social equality of creeds.

In external matters the resemblance between France and England is equally remarkable. England is an Atlantic power—France has a long Atlantic seaboard.

Rivalry abroad.

England has stations in the Mediterranean and holds two important islands—France has a Mediterranean coast and holds one important island. Both Powers intervened in Algiers, and France annexed it; both Powers intervened in Egypt, and England occupied it.

France and England in Africa.

Both France and England have possessions on the west coast of Africa. In southern Africa the European position of England and France is counterchanged. There England is the continental Power and France (in Madagascar) the insular. In most of the great British dependencies and colonies it has been at one time doubtful whether England or France was to be the final occupant; and though

the superior colonising genius of England and her prudent European alliances have generally settled the question in her favour, there has been enough of rivalry to leave its mark in history, in the nomenclature of places, and even (in one instance) in the survival of an important French-speaking population. Nor does the world-rivalry of France and England show any sign of coming to an end. Their policy at Constantinople and St. Petersburgh has quite recently been antagonistic. It is steadily antagonistic in Egypt, and although the wisdom of rulers (happily greater than that of populations) has led to an agreement about the Suez Canal and the New Hebrides, there may at any time arise the contention that leads to war. Although France is now incomparably inferior to England as a colonial Power, the English are still as jealous of French influence as if it might ultimately regain Canada and India. The Tonquin and Madagascar expeditions were treated in the English press with a jealousy only equalled by the French newspapers about Egypt, and both enterprises were followed by fresh British annexations in Asia and South Africa. In a word, although French colonising schemes may not, in the present day, be comparable to what England has done and is still doing, they are of sufficient importance to keep alive the ancient sense of rivalry, the undying jealousy of neighbours who have known each other too long and met each other too often.

Rivalry in the East.

English Jealousy of French Colonial Enterprises.

The peculiarity of this case is that it cannot be settled by a war, like the old jealousy between Austria and Prussia. Neither of the two Powers feels able to expel the other from her position. I remember that, when the English attacked the Zulu king Cetewayo and broke his power, it was maintained in England that a State had the

Not to be ended by a War.

The Right to break a Neighbour's Strength.

right to break the power of a neighbour if its existence could be considered menacing. How much more, then, would England have a right to break the naval power of France, which is close to her own shores and menaces her own capital, and what an error of policy she commits by tolerating the existence and the increase of the French fleet! Why this long-suffering tenderness of respect for French arsenals? The answer is that England is not so sure of victory in a war with France as she was in the war against Cetewayo. The principle that it is right to break the power of a neighbour is not applied when that power is really formidable. In other words, the more it is desirable that a neighbour's strength should be broken, the less is it likely to be done.

Not applicable against the Strong.

Possession of the Channel Islands.

Now let us consider the question from the French side. The English hold several islands which are very near to the French shore, and the French are vexed by England's possession of these islands. It is not so galling a wound to French pride as the English possession of Gibraltar is to the pride of Spain, still it is a perpetual little sore that irritates Frenchmen when they think of it. They do not trouble their minds about ancient historical considerations. The Queen, for them, is not the Duchess of Normandy, but the head of the rival Power, and they do not like to see this Power holding insular fortresses like unsinkable warships anchored close to their own shores. Well, this being their state of mind, why do they not annex the Channel Islands and reverse the situation by occupying the Isle of Wight? The answer is that the enterprise is felt to be too formidable. To get Sark it would be necessary to vanquish England, and France does not feel sure of being able to accomplish that.

England not to be readily Overcome.

During the long and bloody rivalry of these two countries in the past it is a wonder that neither of them ever managed to murder the other. The will was certainly not wanting; there was no pity, but it is not easy to murder a great nation. The modern Carthage was to have been effaced, yet she is not effaced. Even in the present day each is unable to annihilate her neighbour. Try to imagine a French General surrounding London with his troops; the idea is inconceivable, one cannot see how he is to get them there. And now try to imagine an English army, without continental allies, surrounding Paris with a ring of iron as the Germans did; this idea is as inconceivable as the other; one cannot see how the English army is to reach Paris. Could it land? And if it landed, could it get as far as Amiens?

The Modern Carthage.

Conquest difficult in both Cases.

I cannot conclude this chapter without frankly admitting that national jealousy is reasonable so long as it confines itself to the truth. It is quite reasonable that the French should want to push the English out of Canada and Egypt, and that the English should wish to sink the French fleet. What is unreasonable is for two peoples to depreciate each other in books and newspapers, and blacken each other's private characters because both are formidable in a military or a naval sense. How is it that we hear so much of French immorality, and nothing, or next to nothing, of Italian? How is it that, in France, we have heard so much of English cruelty and barbarity, whilst the accounts of Turkish cruelty were received with the smile of incredulity or the shrug of indifference? Why this so tender French sympathy for the Irish, exaggerating all

That National Jealousy may be Reasonable.

Jealousy in International Criticisms.

their woes? Why this wonderful Protestant sympathy in England for the unauthorised religious orders in France? How does it happen that everything which seems to tell against one of the two countries is received with instant credence in the other? The answer to all these questions may be found in the two words at the head of the present chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### PATRIOTIC DUTY

THIS is a more agreeable chapter to write than the two which have preceded it, for the idea of patriotic duty is always ennobling, even when that difficult kind of duty is irregularly practised and imperfectly understood.

If England were a continental Power the sense of patriotic duty would probably be the same with Englishmen that it is with Frenchmen. The insular position of England has given an exceptional character to the national views of duty.

Effect of the Insular Position of England.

They are more ideal in England, more practical in France. The Englishman thinks, "If I were called upon to make sacrifices for my country I would certainly make them." No doubt he would, but most Englishmen pass through life without being obliged to make any patriotic sacrifice except the payment of taxes, and the French are taxed still more heavily, even in money.

Ideal and Practical Views of Patriotic Duty.

English patriotism may be absolutely relied upon by the Government so far as the sentiment is concerned, and the consequent willingness to accept the burden of practical duty in a time of national calamity; but the danger is that the calamity might be sudden, in which

English Patriotism Reliable.

A Peculiar Danger.

case the efforts of a national patriotism would be unorganised and the patriots themselves untrained.

The Volunteers.

The sense of this danger produced the volunteer movement, which was excellent as an example and as an exercise of patriotic feeling; but if we compare the English volunteers with any one of the great Continental armies, we see at once that their value is moral rather than material. The militia is less an affair of patriotic sentiment and more of an ordinary military institution. It is a sort of reserve answering in the length of its annual exercises to the French *réserve de l'armée active*, but with this important difference, that the militiamen have not necessarily passed through the regular army, and their officers have not necessarily received a military education. Some men and some officers have these advantages, but only by accident.

The Militia.

Military Opinion.

Neither the militia nor the volunteers are taken seriously by the regular army in England, so that the sentiment of patriotic duty which exists in them does not receive that full encouragement which would be desirable for its maintenance. The English army is a special profession, it is not the nation, and its feelings, though patriotic, are at the same time strictly professional. The regulars look upon the militia and volunteers as professional artists look upon meritorious amateurs, that is to say, at the best with good-natured indulgence, and at the worst with undisguised contempt.

The English Army Professional.

The Old Purchase System.

Under the old purchase system English officers formed a caste, and were looked upon with great respect, not because they were ready to sacrifice their lives for their country, since the privates were equally ready to do that, and the privates were not respected. Officers in those

days were respected for being rich and fashionable, or because they were supposed to be the sons of rich men, and the more expensive the habits of the regiment, the deeper was the sentiment of respect. In a word, it was social distinction that was respected in them. The privates were looked upon as a low caste, and the fact that they might have to die for their country did not suffice to elevate them.[1]

Social Distinction of Rich Officers.

I well remember the old feeling about the army in France under the Second Empire. It was national in the sense of being raised by conscription, but it was not regarded as national by the people. It was looked upon as an instrument of oppression in the hands of Louis Napoleon. In those days the rich avoided military service by paying substitutes. The common word for that transaction was not "paying" as you pay a servant, but "buying" as one buys a slave. The substitute was considered to have sold himself, and was specially despised, instead of being honoured as a man willing to serve his country, whilst no contempt whatever attached to the rich man who paid money to shirk an unpleasant and dangerous patriotic duty

Former Feeling about the French Army.

Amongst the benefits of the Franco-German war, and they have been many, there is not one more happy for France than the healthy revolution in public opinion concerning military service. As almost all Frenchmen

Present State of French Feeling about the Army.

[1] I regret not to have preserved some letters written to the English newspapers by private soldiers, in which they described how they were avoided by civilians even of the humbler classes. They appear to have felt themselves more despised in uniform than if they had been out of uniform. This is simply because the English people have never witnessed the sufferings undergone by soldiers in time of war.

have now to serve in one way or another, and as they cannot all be officers, the status of the common soldier has risen. He is not regarded as a mercenary, he is not the guard of a tyrant nor his tool, but a citizen who is paying "the tax of blood" to his mother country, or, in other words, who is doing the most honourable work of his whole life. Whatever he may afterwards accomplish as a private citizen, whatever gold or fame he may win by his industry or talent, he will never do anything with more true dignity in it than that ill-paid work with his regiment. It is nobler to perspire on a dusty road in rough soldier's clothing, with a heavy knapsack and rifle, than to display spotless linen in a carriage. It is higher to groom a war-horse and clean the stirrups or the stable *pour la patrie*, than to be oneself groomed by a hairdresser. A state of public opinion is conceivable in which the humblest services would be held honourable if they belonged to patriotic duty, and this healthy state of opinion is now establishing itself in France. Nothing can exceed the simple cheerfulness with which military duty is generally accepted. It is not always liked, and it is not always pleasant, but it is borne with unflinching good-humour.

The real Dignity of all Military Service however Humble.

The same change in public opinion which has made the humblest military service honourable, has produced a friendly, almost an affectionate, sentiment towards the army. Formerly regarded with distrust, it is now looked upon as the strength and defence of the nation. Nobody now believes that the national forces could be used against civil liberty. The prettiest example of the present state of things was seen at the election of President Carnot. A few hundreds of civilians, un-

The Army and Presidential Elections.

armed, and who might have been dispersed by one company of soldiers, met in the old palace at Versailles, to elect the Chief of the State. The palace was amply guarded, but only to ensure the independence of the electors. A regiment of cavalry waited to escort the new President to Paris without knowing his name. When he stepped into the carriage that quiet civilian was "Commander of the armies of France by land and sea."

This absolute unity of sentiment between the military and civil populations is a great compensation for the burden of universal service. Another is the increase of manliness and the improvement of national health. Of the reality of this improvement I cannot entertain a doubt, having myself frequently known young men who had gained greatly in strength and activity by their military service, and who felt and acknowledged the benefit. This is peculiarly valuable in France on account of the too close confinement of youths in the public schools. The universality of military service has been accompanied by a great increase in the number and activity of the gymnastic societies, and it has led to much military drill within the schools themselves. The sons of peasants acquire some education in the army, which is a valuable instrument for spreading a certain amount of elementary culture, and even more than that, through the regimental libraries. The sons of gentlemen, besides the benefit of physical exercise, are often stimulated, by the hope of promotion, to improve the education they already possess.[1]

Improvement of National Health by Military Service.

Increase of Gymnastics.

Benefit to Education.

[1] For example, at the time when I am writing these pages, a young gentleman, who is an intimate friend of mine, and who has received a scientific education, is diligently preparing himself to

Effect of National Armies on Peace and War.

Before leaving the subject of a national army in France, it may be well to consider its effect on peace and war. Experience proves that national armies are essentially peaceful institutions, *on condition that they are combined with parliamentary government.* Everybody has relations in the national army, consequently it is everybody's desire that unnecessary bloodshed be avoided. Popular French feeling was intensely, and I believe universally, averse to the war in Tonquin; and the sacrifices required for those distant expeditions ruined the political career of a most able minister, Jules Ferry, a man of extraordinary capacity and strength of will. Under free institutions ministers dread a personal effacement of this kind, and Ferry's example has had a salutary effect. As it is, the occupation of Tonquin may at any time be abandoned through a refusal of the credits. It is not improbable that with an English national army there might be a growing objection to the prolonged occupation of India. Even the authoritative monarch of Germany could not, by an imperial caprice, despatch the national army to conquer the Chinese Empire. In France, every imaginable war is unpopular, except the one for the recovery of the lost provinces, and there is no desire to undertake even that patriotic war of deliverance without the certainty of success.

Possible Consequences of an English National Army.

Conscription repugnant to English Feeling.

The formation of a national army by means of conscription is repugnant to English feeling as an interference with personal liberty, but it is improbable that it can for

pass an examination for a commission in the artillery next month. Being obliged to serve in the army in any case, and having a right degree of *amour-propre*, he wishes to be an officer, and in a scientific branch of the service.

ever be postponed in the British Empire. If the English should ever find themselves engaged in a contest with a great European Power, without an ally on their side, they would be compelled to adopt the conscription in a hurry, and therefore in the worst possible conditions for success. Unless England is prepared to abandon her European position altogether, and content herself with being the greatest of Colonial Powers, the wiser course would be for her to reorganise her forces on a broadly national basis, whilst there is time to do it at leisure. A national army is one of those evils which appear enormous at a distance, but diminish on a nearer approach. The burden which is borne equally by all is not felt to be intolerable. It may be objected that with the sharper social distinctions in England a gentleman would feel himself degraded by serving in the ranks. The answer to this objection has been already indicated. The patriotic spirit in the nation might be trusted to form a rational opinion about what is or is not really degrading, if the army were national, and not, as at present, divided into the two jealous classes of professionals and amateurs. Even already a gentleman has no objection to being "full private" in the volunteers. If England were once invaded, and a single English town held by an enemy, all vanities and gentilities would vanish before the nobility of patriotic duty, and a gentleman would feel himself honoured in digging a trench or driving a provision cart.

Burden of a National Army not Intolerable.

English Social Distinctions.

Vanities and Gentilities.

There is one form of patriotic duty in times of peace which is much better understood and much more generally practised in England than in France. The English are violent in party dissension, but they readily sink their own differences in the consideration of foreign affairs, so

English Patriotism as regards Foreign Policy.

that there is, on the whole, a remarkable continuity in the foreign policy of England. In February 1888 Mr. Gladstone gave cordial support in the House of Commons to Lord Salisbury's foreign policy, an incident by no means new in English parliamentary history, and if ever the occasion shall arise when to rally round the Government of the day shall be clearly a patriotic duty, as it was when a conflict with Russia appeared imminent, then all the bitter expressions of political enemies will be forgotten and forgiven, and Tory, Liberal, and Radical will be simply Englishmen.

In France this patriotic union is only seen after war has been actually declared and whilst the conflict is going on. It was, no doubt, shown during the war with Germany, when reactionary noblemen fought under the orders of Gambetta, whom they inwardly execrated, but in times of peace the conduct of French oppositions is rarely patriotic. The line of policy pursued by the reactionary parties at the present day is simply to discredit the Republic, even at the expense of France. To that end they are always willing to upset every cabinet in order to prove the instability of existing institutions, yet at the same time they must be fully aware that their policy is against all the commercial and foreign interests of the country. The disingenuousness of their conduct is clear when they first join the radicals in upsetting a cabinet and then turn round and say, "How lamentable it is that no cabinet, under the Republic, can last more than a few months!" As this book deals only with the present I need not do more than refer to the alliance between the French reactionists and foreign Powers early in the present century, and to the contentment with which they accepted the defeat that led to the Restoration. I

French Oppositions rarely Patriotic in Times of Peace.

Reactionary Disingenuousness.

should be sorry to attribute to the reactionists opinions which are made for them by their enemies, but it is not too much to say that some of them prefer the Prussians to the republicans, and look to a civil war without disfavour, in spite of all the horrors that it would inflict upon their country. Nor is this bitter spirit of reckless hate by any means confined to the monarchical parties. Is it possible to imagine anything more completely anti-patriotic than the conduct of the Parisian communards in 1871?

Unpatriotic Bitterness in France.

The idea of patriotic duty has usually, in the past, been confounded with the passion of hatred. An Englishman who did not hate the French was considered to be unpatriotic, especially if he objected to useless bloodshed and advocated, whenever possible, a policy of conciliation. A few reasonable beings on both sides of the Channel are now beginning to perceive that it is not always, in reality, the most patriotic policy to waste the treasure of their own country and send their own countrymen to slaughter; for this is what blind hatred always comes to in the end. The objects of a patriotic mind alter with the degree of its enlightenment. In rude and ignorant natures patriotism is hatred of the foreigner; in cultivated and generous natures it is a wise and watchful desire for the happiness and prosperity of one's native land. When vulgar patriotism blusters and is quarrelsome, intelligent patriotism keeps a cool head and cleverly steers the ship. The passion of hatred ought to be kept out of international affairs, as a lawyer keeps it out of legal business, looking only to the interest of his client. The vulgar French are childish enough to hate the English; if the English do not hate them in return, the advantage will be all their own.

Hatred and Patriotism.

Vulgar and enlightened Patriotism.

# PART III

## POLITICS

# CHAPTER I

## REVOLUTION

THERE is a strong resemblance between the great French and English political movements of modern times, but they differ from each other chronologically, and also in the terms by which they are usually described.

The resemblance is seen at once when we use the terms that are equally applicable to both. The word "Monarchy," for example, is misleading, because it is still used in the case of England, where one man does *not* govern, and where popular representative institutions have irresistibly developed themselves. The word "Republic" is misleading in another way, because it is insidiously associated with communism by the enemies of genuine parliamentary government.

Misleading Use of the Words "Monarchy" and "Republic."

Such being the abusive power of words, it is evident that so long as we use the words "Monarchy" and "Republic" for England and France we convey the idea of a difference that does not really exist, at least with that degree of antagonism and contrast; but if we use the words "Absolutism" and "Liberty," supposing "Absolutism" to mean government by one person, invested with authority, and "Liberty" to mean national self-government, not anarchy, then we shall much more clearly

The Words "Absolutism" and "Liberty."

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perceive the resemblance in the political movement of the two countries.

England preceded France.

This being said for the sake of clearness, I need only remind the reader that England preceded France by at least a hundred years in the movement from absolutism to liberty, and that this difference of chronology has exercised a very strong influence on English opinion about French affairs. The English have all along had the advantage of a much riper political experience, and they resemble a mature man who has forgotten the mistakes of his own youth and the violence of his boyish temper, whilst he sees those defects in one who is fifteen years younger than himself.

English Treatment of the French Political Evolution.

During all the difficult time of the French passage from absolutism to liberty, the English had a way of treating the French political evolution which was peculiarly their own. They refused to see anything natural or regular in the remarkable process that was going on before their eyes, and perceived only a series of accidents combined with spasmodic human efforts in one direction or another. They did not discern that, through the accidents and the efforts, a great natural force was acting with real though not always visible constancy, the same force which had abolished absolutism in England itself, and produced the great English experiment in representative government.

W. R. Greg.

I have been struck by a passage in one of Mr. W. R. Greg's well-known Essays in *Enigmas of Life*, where he speaks with a total absence of sympathy for the growth of free institutions in France, and betrays the curious but common English belief that if somebody had done something which was easy at a particular time, such institutions might have been prevented from taking root in the country.

"In France," Mr. Greg wrote, "as is every year becoming more recognised by all students of her history, the ochlocracy, which is now driving her to seemingly irretrievable downfall, is traceable to the fatal weakness of monarch and ministers alike in February 1848, when a parliamentary demand for a very moderate extension of a very restricted franchise was allowed to become, first a street riot, and then a mob revolution, though ordinary determination and consistency of purpose among the authorities might have prevented it from ever growing beyond the dimensions of a mere police affair, and have crushed it at the outset."

Quotation from his *Enigmas of Life.*

This, I should say, is an extremely English way of looking at French affairs. The "ochlocracy" (why not simply have said "popular government"?) is driving France to irretrievable downfall—a result not wholly displeasing to her neighbours—and the democratic development might have been prevented if the *bourgeois* king and his ministers had only shown "ordinary determination." A wiser king than Louis Philippe would, no doubt, have made the change to complete democracy gentler and easier by timely concessions; but the ultimate establishment of democratic institutions was inevitable in any case, and inevitable long before Louis Philippe ascended his precarious throne.[1] It was inevitable from the hour when Mirabeau gave his immortal answer to the Marquis de Dreux-Brézé: "Nous sommes ici par la volonté du peuple, et nous n'en sortirons que par la puissance des baïonnettes." From that hour, on the 23d of June 1789, when the "will of the people" was

The "Ochlocracy."

Mirabeau's answer to Dreux-Brézé.

[1] The throne of Louis Philippe was itself a democratic institution.

openly recognised in a French parliament as superior to the will of the king, the establishment of what Mr. Greg called an "ochlocracy," in its complete development, was simply a question of time. How much parliamentary institutions have gained strength in a hundred years may be realised by imagining the effect of a royal summons to the Chamber of Deputies at the present day. There would be no need of a Mirabeau to resist and resent it with indignant eloquence of voice and gesture; at the most, it would excite a smile.

Resemblance in the Political Metamorphosis of England and France.

For myself, I am much more struck by the resemblance than by the difference between England and France in the great political metamorphosis that has come over both countries and is not yet quite completed in either. I see a wonderful resemblance in the course of events, in the evolution of opinion, and in those general tendencies which are far more important than any mere historical accidents, but I see at the same time a great difference in dates and most curious inequalities of pace. The comparison may be made clearer by supposing that two authors are at work upon two books. The elder has begun his manuscript much sooner than the other, but he has not gone on with it very quickly, except at odd times of inspiration. The younger seems to have plagiarised his opening chapters from his predecessor, there are so many striking points of likeness, but after a time he goes on in his own way and works the faster of the two, notwithstanding frequent goings back caused by immense erasures. Just now it seems as if he had left the elder writer behind, but their different ways of work make this very difficult to determine. Neither of the books is as yet completed. As they advance, their

A Comparison with Authorship.

general similarity of tendency and purpose becomes every day more manifest. This vexes the rival authors, who would have preferred to find themselves original.

English critics usually take France during her revolutionary period and compare her with England at another stage when she has got through her revolutionary and is in her reforming period. A more just comparison would be to take England between 1630 and 1730, and France between 1780 and 1880. There are so many points of resemblance between the two that history has almost repeated itself. Our ancestors decapitated a king and the French decapitated theirs; the difference being that the axe was used in one case, and a more ingenious mechanical contrivance in the other. After the execution of Charles I., the English were not yet ripe for liberty, so they fell under the dictatorship of a soldier; the French did exactly the same. When the English were not disposed to endure the Stuarts any longer, they sent them across the Channel. When the French were not disposed to endure the Bourbons any longer, they sent them across the Channel. The constant tendency in both countries has been to increase the power of the representative chamber and diminish that of the nominal head of the State, with this final result: that in France the National Assembly (the two chambers meeting as one) is declared to be sovereign, and in England the Marquis of Hartington has openly attributed sovereignty to the House of Commons, quoting Professor Dicey in reply to an old-fashioned member who stood aghast at what seemed to him an almost treasonable employment of the word.[1]

England from 1630 to 1730, and France from 1780 to 1880.

Sovereignty of the French National Assembly.

Sovereignty of the House of Commons.

[1] For the reader's convenience I quote four passages from Dicey

Difference between France and England in the Intermediate Stage.

There is, however, one very real and essential difference between the English and the French progress towards democracy. The point of departure is the same, the sovereignty of the king; the point of arrival is the same, the sovereignty of the people; but the intermediate stage is not the same. Thanks to the strength of her aristocracy, and especially to its fine energy and spirit, England has been able to pass through a highly convenient intermediate stage, that of an aristocratic republic preserving monarchical appearances. France has not been able to do this, though she tried the experiment in imitation of England, the reason for her inevitable failure being that she had not the kind and quality of aristocracy that was necessary for such a work. In all very disturbing changes there is nothing so convenient, nothing so conducive to prudent deliberation, as a shelter whilst the change is going on. If you destroy your old house to build a new one on its site, you will be glad to hire a temporary residence in the neighbourhood. The English

The English Aristocratic Republic.

Value of Shelter in Times of Change.

on the sovereignty in England. The references are to the first English edition.

"If the true ruler or political sovereign of England were, as was once the case, the King, legislation might be carried out in accordance with the King's will by one of two methods."—*The Law of the Constitution*, p. 354.

"Parliament is, from a merely legal point of view, the absolute sovereign of the British Empire."—*Ibid.*

"The electorate is, in fact, the sovereign of England. It is a body which does not, and from its nature hardly can, itself legislate, and which, owing chiefly to historical causes, has left in existence a theoretically supreme legislature."—*Ibid.*, p. 355.

"Our modern mode of constitutional morality secures, though in a roundabout way, what is called abroad 'the sovereignty of the people.'"—*Ibid.*

were most fortunate in this, that they had a fine, substantial-looking mansion to retire to, a dignified building that looked as if it would last for ever; the French were out in the cold, and had to dwell in tents, by which I mean their temporary written constitutions.

The French dwelt in Tents.

The transition to democratic government was not easy in an old country like France, where the monarchy, in such comparatively recent times as those of Louis XIV., had been the strongest and most splendid monarchy in the world, the realisation of that ideal monarchy in which the king is not simply a figure-head, but a governor whom all in his realm obey, they being his real, not nominal, *subjects*, thrown under his feet by a destiny outside of choice. Neither was Louis XIV. simply a governor; he was at the same time a kind of demigod, who dwelt in the midst of a ceremonious cultus whereof he was the centre and the object. And although this great prince had degraded the nobility into courtiers, the noble class was still a numerous and a coherent caste which had to be pulverised by democratic legislation before the democratic principle could be finally established. Surely it is not surprising that every step in advance should have been followed by a reaction. Restorations, periods of lassitude, experiments, mistakes — all these were the natural concomitants of a transition for which French history shows no precedent; yet so long as the transition was actually in progress how few Englishmen understood it—how few of them perceived that the modern democratic idea was always, in spite of appearances, steadily making its way!

The Ideal Monarchy.

The old French Noble Caste.

Irregular Nature of French Progress.

The English revolution has differed from the French in one important particular. The English have no written

Difference between the English and French Revolutions.

constitutions, and therefore they do not violate them, there being nothing, in fact, to violate. Although the change of dynasty was made openly, and the Protestant succession established, it has been possible for another revolution to take place in complete obscurity, a revolution far more radical than any change of dynasty, and of far greater political importance than the religion of the king. The reader knows that I am alluding to the establishment of cabinet government. This, the greatest of all revolutions, has accomplished itself so insidiously that nobody can tell the date of it. French revolutionary dates are all perfectly well known, but this momentous English date is a mystery even to the English.

Establishment of Cabinet Government.

What gives especial importance to the English system of cabinet government is that it has been exactly copied by France. The United States of America have a system of their own, presidential government, that the French entirely overlooked when they made their present constitution, though some of the more thoughtful amongst them now regret that it was not adopted in preference to the English.[1] In France, as in England, the Lower House elects the cabinet by overthrowing every cabinet that does not happen to please it, and a French cabinet, like an English one, lives a precarious life, dependent either upon its representation of the ideas most prevalent in

Copied by France.

Precarious Existence of French Cabinets.

[1] The American system would not have succeeded in France. If the president had exercised the authority of an American president the Chamber would not have endured it, and there would have been a presidential crisis, with a new presidential election, every six months. The present system is not ideally perfect, but it suits the French temper better than any other that modern ingenuity can devise.

the Chamber, or else on servile submission to its will. Such is the delusive effect of words, that the use of the words "Republic," "President," "Senate," makes unthinking people believe that the French have adopted the American system rather than the English. There is only one essential difference between England and France, and that has been quite recently discovered. The French deputies have found out a way of making the president retire by declining to accept cabinet offices under him, and in case of real or seeming necessity this method will certainly be resorted to again. On the other hand, no human being can foresee by what method an English House of Commons would compel an unpopular Sovereign to abdicate.[1]

Delusive Effect of Words.

New Way of enforcing a President's Retirement.

The compulsory retirement of President Grévy and the peaceful election of his successor have completed the modern French system of *making all changes of persons possible without violence.* This is perhaps the best guarantee for internal tranquillity, especially in a country like France, where political reputations are soon used up and services almost immediately forgotten. It is also, in its far-reaching consequences, the most important ultimate result of the French Revolution.

Peaceful Changes of Persons.

[1] It may be answered that this could be done by refusing to vote the supplies, but if the Sovereign were perfectly obstinate the House of Commons could not long put a stop to the working of the public service.

## CHAPTER II

### LIBERTY

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

OF the three words, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," an Englishman usually accepts the first as a noble aim for nations, whilst he smiles at the two others.[1]

"Liberty" is a sacred word in England, its birthplace and its home. We all know what we mean by it, and I need not attempt a definition, still it may be well for us to think how it is that the English all believe themselves to be free, whilst in France it is only the republicans who think that of themselves. The monarchists, still a large and influential body, believe themselves to be all victims of oppression.

French Republicans only Free.

The answer may be given in a brief sentence. The English believe themselves to be free, simply because they have got into the habit of accepting the decision of a majority in the House of Commons, even when it is against themselves. The decision is always accepted, though frequently with the intention of getting it reversed at a future date.

Reason for the Difference in sense of Freedom between England and France.

The French reactionary classes have not this feeling

[1] It is an English habit to represent *égalité* as an Utopian aspiration for equality in all things. The French understand it to mean nothing more than equality before the law.

of respect for the decisions of the Chamber of Deputies. They have not got into the habit of it, perhaps they never will, and they chafe under every adverse decision, which seems to them a distinct act of tyranny.

"There is nothing sacred in a majority," they say. To this an Englishman can only answer that in the working of free institutions it has been found a convenience to accept the decisions of majorities, at least provisionally. Nothing Sacred in a Majority.

The French reactionaries have neither acquired this habit nor are they likely to acquire it, so the feeling of being oppressed must remain with them, particularly as they are not likely to procure the abolition of universal suffrage.

A resemblance between France and England is much more likely to be brought about in another way. Considerable numbers of people in the English upper classes are already feeling a hatred for Mr. Gladstone comparable in intensity to that which their French equals had for Gambetta. Mr. Gladstone himself gave the signal for combat by opposing "the masses" to "the classes" in words that will be long remembered. Mr. Morley said of the House of Lords that it must be "either mended or ended," and that expression also is one not likely to be forgotten. Now if we suppose the case, not absolutely impossible, of these two democratic English leaders, at the head of a strong majority in the House of Commons, legislating in the sense indicated broadly and generally by the expressions just quoted, would the English "classes" have a heartfelt respect for the new laws? Judging by present signs of the times, it seems by no means unlikely that the sentiments of a defeated English upper-class A Resemblance between France and England. Mr. Gladstone. Effects of a Contest of Classes.

minority would resemble those of the same defeated class in France. A contest of classes is a bitter contest, and England, as yet, has had but a slight experience of it. How much the Irish question has become, in England, a class question, may be seen by the frank acknowledgment of Mr. Gladstone that "the classes" are against him. Besides the majority in the House of Commons which is against Home rule (in the present year, 1888), Mr. Gladstone enumerates as its opponents "nine-tenths of the House of Lords; nine-tenths at least of what is termed the wealth of the country and of the vast forces of social influence, an overwhelming share (in its own estimation) of British intellect, and undoubtedly an enormous proportion of those who have received an academical education in England."[1] If Mr. Gladstone hopes to overcome these great social powers, it can only be by the popular vote; and if he conquers by that means, then he will have established the state of things which exists in France, where the upper classes are overborne by numbers. It is easy to apply Mr. Gladstone's own phrases, with a slight change, quite truly to the French. "Nine-tenths of the nobility, nine-tenths at least of what is called the wealth of the country, and of the vast forces of social influence, an overwhelming share (in its own estimation) of French intellect, and undoubtedly an enormous proportion of those who have received a clerical education"[2] are hostile to the

The Irish Question a Class Question.

Powerful Social Opposition to Mr. Gladstone.

French Upper Classes overborne by Numbers.

[1] Article in the *Contemporary Review* for March 1888.

[2] The reader will observe that I have substituted "nobility" for "House of Lords," as there is no House of Lords in France, and "clerical" for "academical" education, as there is nothing corresponding to Oxford and Cambridge.

Republic in France. And what in consequence? The consequence is that these classes entirely deny the existence of liberty in that country, although voting is perfectly free, and laws are always passed by a majority.

The "Classes" deny the Existence of "Liberty" in France.

A close study of French feeling (and of English feeling as it is gradually assimilating itself to French) has led me to the following conclusion: *Government by majority is considered to be a state of liberty only so long as opposing forces are so nearly balanced that the minority of to-day may hope to become the majority of to-morrow.* A minority lives on hope, when it has no hope it becomes bitter and considers itself the victim of tyranny. To understand English liberty as it flourished in the last generation, we must remember that it meant for the "classes" the kind of liberty a gentleman and his wife enjoy in their own house. They may have disputes between themselves, sometimes one has the upper hand and sometimes the other, but whichever rules for the day there is no insubordination amongst the domestics, and, if there were, the two would unite to repress it.

Minorities live on Hope.

English Liberty in the last Generation.

In a word, by "liberty" people really understand liberty to govern others. The most conspicuous example of this interpretation is given by Leo XIII., who says that he can enjoy no sense of freedom in Rome until he is permitted to govern all the other inhabitants of the city.

Liberty to govern Others.

Liberty according to Leo XIII.

Whether it can be called "liberty" or not, the kind of government which has succeeded in establishing itself in England and France is exactly the same in both countries. It is cameral government, the rule of a single chamber, the most modern form of absolutism, especially when the chamber delegates all its power to one man. The French Chamber has been so clearly

Cameral Government. The most Modern Form of Absolutism.

aware of the power such a man would wield that it has shown an extreme jealousy of personal government ever since MacMahon's unsuccessful expériment. It would not permit even Gambetta to become a potentate. It perceived the fine governing faculties of Jules Ferry and put him aside. Nobody with a despotic temper has a chance of remaining prime minister. The meddling disposition of Wilson was supposed to be creating an occult personal power at the Elysée, so he was expelled from that palace, even though his expulsion involved that of a good president. The same jealousy of personal power removed General Boulanger from the War Office. The longer cameral government lasts in France, the more evident it becomes that the Chamber means to have its way in everything and to suppress all inconvenient individualities.

French Jealousy of born Rulers.

Opposition of the French Chamber to Individualities.

We have not to go far back in English history to observe the same tendency in the House of Commons. The English Chamber has dealt with Mr. Gladstone in the French fashion. The dissentient Liberals caused his downfall with no more regard for his splendid reputation than if they had been so many French deputies. They had, no doubt, a perfect right to act independently, but it was an assertion of the power of numbers in the House of Commons against the authority of genius and renown.

Numbers *versus* Genius in the House of Commons.

"In spite of appearances," said Mr. Frederic Harrison on the 1st of January 1886, "and conventional formulas, habits, and fictions to the contrary, the House of Commons represents the most absolute autocracy ever set up by a great nation since the French Revolution. Government here is now merely a committee of that huge democratic club, the House of Commons, without

Mr. Frederic Harrison on the Autocracy of the House.

any of the reserves of power in other parts of the constitution which are to be found in the constitutions of France and the United States."

America lies outside of our present subject, but with regard to France there is little to be said for "the reserves of power in other parts of the constitution." They look very reassuring on paper, in reality their effect is feeble. It is plain that President Grévy had the clearest right to stay at his post, and he had no desire to abandon it. He had been guilty of no crime or misdemeanour, he had been invested with authority for seven years. What was that authority worth when it came to a contest with the Chamber? Dissolution? The senate dared not help him to dissolve. When that saddened and broken old man followed his luggage out of the courtyard of the Elysée the world knew that there was only one real power in France.

Small Practical Value of Paper Guarantees.

Only one real Power in France.

The inference from these events in the two countries is that the tendency of this new thing, cameral government, may at first be to create a powerful despot with the support of the chamber, but that after longer experience an elected chamber will become wary and keep very much on its guard against eminent persons, however eloquent, and will be jealous of them and keep them down. This watchful jealousy in a chamber may turn out to be the best of all safeguards for national liberty—it saved France from the authority of Gambetta, a man of a most despotic disposition—but it is unfavourable to an *esprit de suite* in policy or to a vigorous policy of any kind, either at home or abroad, as we may all see by the ephemeral French cabinets, in which mediocrity and obscurity appear to be positive recommendations.

Cameral Jealousy a Safeguard of Liberty.

But unfavourable to vigorous Policy.

Effect of Political on Religious Liberty. Political Revolution and Religious Change.

In France.

In England.

Incomplete Character of Religious Liberty in England.

Freedom of Discussion in England.

Political liberty is seldom without some kind of effect on religious liberty. A political revolution may be associated with a religious change in one of two ways. It may proclaim the right to real liberty of thought, or it may substitute a new orthodoxy for an old one. The first was done in France in 1789 by the Declaration of the Rights of Man; the second was done twice over in England—once by erecting a new Anglican orthodoxy, and a second time by erecting a new Puritan orthodoxy, the ultimate effect of the last being the establishment of religious freedom for various classes of Protestant dissenters, but not for unbelievers. "The denial of the truth of Christianity," says Professor Dicey, "or of the authority of the Scriptures by 'writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking,' on the part of any person who has been educated in or made profession of Christianity in England, is by statute a criminal offence, entailing very severe penalties. When once, however, the principles of the common law and the force of the enactments still contained in the statute-book are really appreciated, no one can maintain that the law of England recognises anything like that natural right to the free communication of thoughts and opinions which was proclaimed in France nearly a hundred years ago to be one of the most valuable Rights of Man. . . . Freedom of discussion is, in England, little else than the right to write or say anything which a jury, consisting of twelve shopkeepers, think it expedient should be said or written. Such liberty may vary at different times and seasons from unrestricted license to very severe restraint."

## CHAPTER III

### CONSERVATISM

Novelties adopted by Conservative Feeling.

No country can be more favourable than France for the observation of that process by which a startling novelty is taken after a short time under the protection of the most sober conservative feeling.

France both Experimental and Conservative.

France is at the same time willing to make hazardous experiments, and yet extremely conservative by natural disposition. The consequence of these two apparently opposite tendencies in the same nation is that the results of successful experiments are preserved for continuous practical application, and the rest very soon discarded and forgotten. Sometimes an experiment has been partially successful and is thought to have failed temporarily, not from any want of applicability in the idea itself, but owing to unfavourable circumstances. In such cases the experiment is not likely to be lost. It will be tried again, at least once, or more than once.

Partially Successful Experiments.

Experimental and Conservative Tendencies in French Constitutions.

The two tendencies, experimental and conservative, have both been manifested many times in French constitutions. How many there have been of them I cannot inform the reader. Dicey gives a minimum of sixteen; there may have been more. The number of them is of no importance; the state of mind that produced them is alone of any real importance.

The Love of Change not the Motive for making written Constitutions.

It has commonly been assumed that a state of mind which could produce so many constitutions was animated by the love of change. This is exactly the opposite of the truth. Those who love change on its own account provide for it by the most elastic arrangements in order to leave everything open. The state of feeling that induces men to bind themselves, or try to bind themselves, by written rules for their future guidance is a desire for order and permanence. All that can be truly said against the French experimenters is that their hopes of orderly arrangements were premature. Even when producing disorder they have been lovers of order and desired it, though during many years, in the eagerness of inexperience, they failed to perceive that their political life was still too much unsettled to be cast into fixed forms. At last, without abandoning the safeguard of a written constitution (that of 1875 has already a respectable antiquity), they have provided for future changes by making revision possible under conditions that have hitherto completely assured the maintenance of order.

The Desire for Order and Permanence.

Premature Hopes of Order.

Revision.

Sir Henry Maine on the Dislike to Change.

The reader perhaps remembers how eloquently Sir Henry Maine described the dislike to change which is inherent in large bodies of mankind. "Vast populations, some of them with a civilisation considerable but peculiar, detest that which in the west would be called reform. The entire Mohammedan world detests it. The multitude of coloured men who swarm in the great continent of Africa detest it, and it is detested by that large part of mankind which we are accustomed to leave on one side as barbarous or savage. The millions upon millions of men who fill the Chinese empire loathe it and (what is more) despise it. . . . There is not the shadow of a

The Mohammedan World.

Africa.

China.

doubt that the enormous mass of the Indian population hates and dreads change, as is natural in the parts of a body-social solidified by caste."[1]

Modern Character of the Enthusiasm for Change.

Sir Henry Maine afterwards pointed out that the enthusiasm for change was not only comparatively rare but also extremely modern. "It is known but to a small part of mankind, and to that part but for a short period during a history of incalculable length. It is not older than the free employment of legislation by popular governments."

The intention of the passages quoted is to depreciate the love of reform in modern life, and is therefore unfriendly to popular government as we know it, but this unfriendly intention does not deprive the quotations of their truth. All that, and much more written by the same author on that subject, is strictly true. He went on to point to the intense and universal conservatism of women, "in all communities the strictest conservators of usage and the sternest censors of departure from accepted rules of morals, manners, and fashions."

Universal Conservatism of Women.

Rarity of the Reforming Impulses.

This constant strength of conservative instinct is not counterbalanced by any equivalent reforming instinct. It is not our hereditary habit of mind that leads us to reform, but our occasional fits of reasoning and of intellectual unrest.

French Tendency to a Democratic Conservatism.

My belief about the French is that their real tendency is decidedly not revolutionary but towards a democratic conservatism, and that they move towards this end by gradually including first one thing and then another in the catalogue of fixed usages.

A French Theory of ultimate Civilisations.

An intelligent French writer has maintained that every

[1] *Popular Government*, Essay III.

race in the world advances towards a certain ultimate civilisation which is naturally its own, and that when this civilisation is attained there may be an end to change for centuries, or even, as in China, for thousands of years. He believed that France was rapidly approaching the complete development of that peculiar kind of civilisation for which the French genius is fitted, and might afterwards enter upon a changeless time of very long duration.

France thought to be approaching her Complete Development.

The decimal system of weights and measures and the decimal coinage are good examples of a recent innovation established at first by law and already protected by conservative usage. I never met with a Frenchman who desired to go back to the old complicated system; indeed the facility of calculation by the decimal method has spoiled the French for any other. I see no reason why the present decimal systems should not endure with French civilisation. They are exactly in accordance with the scientific turn of the race, and with its love of promptitude, clearness, rapidity, and uniformity.[1]

Example of the Decimal Systems.

Then there is the division of the country into departments. The old historical provinces were too large for administrative purposes, the departments are highly convenient. Being named after the natural features of the country, they at once convey to the mind an idea of their

Division of France into Departments.

[1] An English critic once said that the decimal monetary system had not yet been accepted by the French people because they counted in sous. They do not invariably count in sous, but they often do, and that without being unfaithful to the decimal principle, as may be seen by the following table :—

The five-franc piece = 100 sous.
The half-franc piece = 10 sous.
The one-sou piece = 1 sou.

situation in physical geography. The division could not have been better done; it has now become as familiar to the French as division by counties is to the English, and the two may be equally durable.

The System of Departmental Administration.

The same may be said of the highly-organised and extremely convenient system of departmental administration. It has survived several great changes of government, and is likely to outlive any others that may occur in the future. Some slight modifications may be introduced, such as the suppression of useless sub-prefectures.

The French University likely to last.

The French University, which has schools in every department of France, and academic examining bodies in seventeen (including Algeria), is one of those institutions of Napoleon I. which seem likely to last with his code. It answers to the desire in the middle classes for a widely-spread Latin and mathematical education. This education may be modified in future years without destroying the University.

Probable Permanent Character of Universal Suffrage.

Universal suffrage has always been so difficult to abolish that nobody has attempted it, though no institution can be more cordially detested by some influential classes. The universality of military service has greatly increased the strength of universal suffrage, as every man may be called upon to die for the country, and therefore thinks that he has a natural right to vote. We are familiar with the phrase "a stake in the country." Every Frenchman has at least one stake in the country—his life. There is not the most remote probability that universal suffrage will ever be repealed.

Probable Permanence of Representative Government.

Many quite sober-minded and thoughtful Frenchmen are now of opinion that representative government, after several unsuccessful attempts, is firmly and finally

established in their country. I dare hardly go so far as to assert so much, but I am fully convinced that, if not now, it will be ultimately the fixed form of government in France.

Abandonment of the Republican Calendar.

As an example of a reform which has *not* been preserved I may mention the republican calendar. It was both beautiful and rational in its observation of nature, and was certainly an improvement upon the old calendar in the choice of names, but it fell into disuse from its inconvenience. It was only national and not international as a calendar ought to be. In times like these, when the French decimal coinage is already an international system, it would be a reactionary measure to go back to a national calendar. It will only be revived if several other nations agree to use it at the same time, which is not likely to happen.

A Calendar ought to be International.

In England it is easy to point to several institutions, once quite new and having the character of innovations, which the spirit of conservatism immediately adopted and has since defended quite as resolutely as if they were of immemorial antiquity. The most wonderful of these is the Church of England. The more one learns of the temper of aristocracies, the more astonishing it seems that a great aristocracy can ever have changed the outward form of its religion. Try to imagine the French *noblesse* becoming "evangelical," or think in our own day of the utter hopelessness of any project for converting the English gentry to Wesleyan Methodism! Such transformations are unthinkable, yet the fact remains that the English nobility and gentry did once go over *en masse* to the new communion, and that they have been as conservative of it ever since as if it were still the faith of

The Church of England.

Wonderful Change that led to its Establishment.

their ancestors. Anglicanism is every whit as strong in England as the older Church is in France, though Roman Catholicism is a natural growth formed by the evolution of the religious sentiment through ages. The strength of Anglicanism as a social and political institution is proved by nothing more clearly than this, that in our own day, in many individual cases, it actually outlives Christianity. I mean that in these cases all dogma is rejected or explained away, whilst the Anglican name and customs are preserved.

The Strength of Anglicanism.

Catholic Emancipation was most vigorously resented by English conservative sentiment in the third decade of the present century. In its ninth decade not only are Catholics on a footing of political equality with their fellow-subjects, but their superior clergy are treated with a deference and a consideration never given to Protestant Dissenters. The most venerated ecclesiastic in England is a Cardinal. Whenever the Catholic party in France is in conflict with the State it is sure of conservative sympathy in England.[1] Any attempt to replace Catholics under the ban would now be resented by the upper classes.

Catholic Emancipation.

English Conservative Sympathy with French Catholics.

The revolutionary monarchy has now been so loyally adopted in England that we only remember its revolutionary origin when historical students remind us of it. For the common people, especially for the religious, Her Majesty reigns by divine right. There seems to be a shade of impiety and even a perceptible odour of treason in the crude assertion that she reigns simply by Act of Parliament.

The Revolutionary Monarchy.

Revival of Divine Right.

[1] The word "conservative" is not used in this place with reference to the Tory party alone. There is much conservative sentiment in other parties.

Permanent Nature of Popular Gains.

On the other hand, popular claims that were once violently resisted assume, when they have been admitted, the character of indefeasible rights. Every extension of the suffrage is a popular gain, not for a time only, but for ever. Every gain made by the friends of religious toleration, and by those who work in hope for a future condition of religious equality, is a sure and permanent gain. There is a great deal of conservatism in England, there is little or no reaction. Indeed, the words "reaction" and "reactionary" are scarcely English words at all in a political sense; they are French words. No Englishman ever has that spiteful hatred of the present which distinguishes the French *réactionnaire*.

Little Reaction in England.

The Conservatism of Antipathy.

There is a species of conservatism both in England and France which is maintained by mutual antipathy. Each country clings desperately to its old ways when a better way has been shown by the other, and if one of them feels compelled, at last, to follow the other's example, the utmost care is taken to disguise the imitation, so that it may not seem to be an acknowledgment of superiority. The reader may remember how unwillingly Thiers admitted the merits of railways, how he visited the north of England to see and try them, and how he reported unfavourably to his government, saying that railways might answer for England, but could never be suitable to France. The parallel instance is the well-known English unbelief in the Suez Canal, a French undertaking.

Thiers and Railways.

England and the Suez Canal.

English Opposition to French Decimal Systems.

Here are two other examples, the English unwillingness to accept the French decimal systems, because they are French, and the unwillingness, on the other side of the Channel, to take the British penny postage stamp as

it was. The English monetary system is inconvenient, but it is not intolerable, and may be retained for centuries; the system (or chaos) of weights and measures is incoherent and intolerable. Few Englishmen could part with the pound sterling without a pang, but surely it need not cost them much sorrow to see the extinction of the pound troy, which is two hundred and forty pennyweights, of the pound avoirdupois, which is two hundred and fifty-six drams, and of the apothecaries' pound, which is two hundred and eighty-eight scruples. The objection to the metrical system is not absolute, the English are coming to it slowly, it is already legal, and men of science have long since adopted it. The French objection to the penny post is gradually giving way to the desire for increased cheapness, and now the letter has got down to three sous; but why this reluctance, on both sides, to adopt the neighbour's good invention in its simplicity?[1]

Intolerable English System of Weights and Measures.

French Objection to the Penny Post.

France and England do gradually learn from each other against their will. The consequence is that their political habits are slowly assimilating. The English have adopted the closure, and are tending towards earlier

Slow Assimilation of France and England.

[1] Even if the English did ultimately adopt the French weights and measures, without the coinage, they would not enjoy the full convenience of those systems, which consists in great part in their *relation* to the coinage. For example, in English land measure (what is called "square measure") you have 160 poles to the acre. A farmer takes an acre at thirty-seven shillings, how much is that per pole? I do not know; I must make an elaborate calculation to find it out. A French farmer takes a *hectare* at sixty-seven francs, how much is that per *are*? Owing to the *intentional relation between measures and money*, the answer comes instantaneously, without calculation, sixty-seven centimes.

parliamentary sittings. In elections they have accepted the French system of secret voting, and in course of time they will accept the French principle of "one man, one vote." In 1888 the English at last adopted the French *Conseils Généraux.*

# CHAPTER IV

## STABILITY

Reactionary French Ideas about English Stability.

It is customary with the reactionary parties in France to look to England as the model of everything that is stable; and as their ignorance of English affairs prevents them from seeing what is going on beneath the surface, they conclude that what they believe to be the British constitution is invested with indefinite durability, whilst the French republican constitution is always about to perish.

Old Institutions provoke Change.

In calculating thus, the French reactionists omit one consideration of immense importance. They fail to see that the very presence of old institutions, unless they are so perfectly adapted to modern wants as to make people forget that they are old, is in itself a provocative to the spirit of change, and that it excites a desire for novelty which remains unappeased so long as the old institutions last. The old thing quickens the impulse to modernise when something not old enough to attract attention by its antiquity would have left that special and peculiar passion unawakened.

Mediæval Buildings.

As an example of this, I may mention the existence of mediæval buildings in the streets of a town. Such buildings act as a powerful stimulus to the destructive

tendencies of modern municipalities. French cities formerly abounded in such old buildings, but the municipalities cleared most of them away, and it became necessary to restrain this destructive instinct by the enactment of a law for the protection of all buildings classed as "historical monuments."

"Historical Monuments."

In like manner the presence of the State Church in England, of the hereditary legislating peers, and of the royal family, as well as of many other ancient things of minor importance, is a stimulus to the spirit of change in radical politicians. It sounds paradoxical, but it is true, that the conservative House of Lords is an obstacle to the final establishment of a conservative spirit in the people. Great numbers of the English electors and many of their representatives are animated by the same tendency to destroy and reconstruct which used to be very active in France.

Anti-Conservative Effect of the House of Lords.

It does not require any special clearness of vision to perceive that, so far from having closed the era of great changes, Great Britain and Ireland have only entered upon it. Their future for many years, perhaps for an entire century, is destined to be a future of change,—of change desired eagerly by some, resisted with all the strength of self-protecting instinct by many others, admitted to be inevitable by the wise, who will be anxious only to direct and control it wisely. It will be a time of uncertainty and unrest, of new political combinations, and very probably of ephemeral cabinets. The tendency to instability in cabinets was already manifest before the coalition which enabled Lord Salisbury's government to live.[1] The well-known difficulty in finding support for

A Future of Change for Great Britain.

Instability in English Cabinets.

[1] M. de Freycinet, at the time when he was Foreign Minister

any government in France was beginning to show itself very plainly in England also. Except on a single question, the House of Commons will no longer conveniently divide itself into two parties, after the old English fashion, but splits into three or four, almost like the French Chamber.

Division into two Parties at an End.

The condition of instability which already exists in England, was strikingly illustrated in the year 1886 by a chance vote in the House of Commons. Mr. Labouchere had so powerful a minority in favour of his resolution against the hereditary principle in the other House, that a sign from Mr. Gladstone would have immediately converted it into a majority, and Mr. Gladstone's support of the resolution was refused in terms scarcely more consolatory for hereditary legislators than those of the resolution itself. The House did not listen to Mr. Labouchere's speech with indignation, but with amusement, and the only incident of any solemnity was the exclamation of a member who cried out "The Writing on the Wall!" when the formidable minority was made known. Now, although the English have not any written constitution, all foreigners have hitherto been accustomed to believe in the dignity and permanence of the House of Lords, and they have believed it to be a part of that great reality which was called *La Constitution Anglaise*. How is it possible to retain these old beliefs after such a parliamentary incident as this?

Labouchere's Resolution against the Hereditary Principle, 1886.

"The Writing on the Wall."

The question of stability as it affects established Churches will be dealt with in the chapters on Religion.

Stability of Established Churches.

in France, expressed a feeling of regret, that owing to the instability of English cabinets, it was not easy to carry on protracted negotiations.—*Speech of the 27th of November* 1886.

Difficulty of Tolerance in a State Church.

The true cause of the instability of Anglicanism is not religious, but social. A State Church can hardly afford to be tolerant; the necessities of her position require her to repress Dissent with the strong hand, as the dominant Churches both in England and France have done in other ages. If a State Church has no longer the strength to persecute efficaciously, free religious communities will grow up around her, and in course of time they will claim equality. They have got it in France by co-establishment, which postpones the final separation; but in England there is not co-establishment, and it is too late to think of that expedient, as some well-intentioned men are now doing. The Dissenters dislike being treated as inferiors; they are weary of being put "under the ban." I remember reading a letter from a Dissenter who had visited America, describing the novel and delightful sensation of being in a country where he was not "under the ban" on account of his religious opinions, and his sensations on returning to England, where, as a Dissenter, he felt at every step that he was placed in an inferior caste. In France the sacerdotal power owes its present instability and precariousness of tenure to its essentially political character. In both countries the real and genuine religious hatred which belonged to the old spirit of enmity between Catholic and Protestant has given place to a newer and less virulent kind of antagonism.

Dislike felt by Dissenters to being treated as Inferiors.

Preference of Utility to Dignity.

More August Institutions in England than in France.

The essential character of all modern political change is the preference of utility to dignity, and consequently of useful institutions to august institutions. At the present time (1888) there are many more august institutions in England than in France. Not only have we the monarchy and the House of Peers, but there are still the

old romantic orders of knighthood, including the Garter, which is the most august order in the world, and the least democratic. In France such institutions have been replaced by the Presidency of the Republic, the Senate, and the Legion of Honour, all much less august than the throne of Saint Louis, the Peers of France, and the Order of the Holy Ghost. The change is something like that from pope and cardinals to an evangelical consistory.

Will England herself retain eternally what remains to her of the august dignities of the past? It is now believed that the State Church and the House of Lords are both institutions of doubtful durability. Is the throne itself secure from that destructive spirit which is threatening them?

Security of the English Throne.

The truest answer may be that the fate of the throne depends far more on the qualities of a single individual than does the fate of the other august English institutions. A very good, wise, and prudent king would make the throne last during a long reign; a bad, incompetent, foolish king would certainly unsettle and perhaps overturn it. In the nineteenth century the person who has done most for the English monarchy began her work as a girl, and said to Spring Rice fifty years ago, "Never mention the word 'trouble.' Only tell me how the thing is to be done, to be done rightly, and I will do it if I can."[1] It is possible, however, that Her Majesty's reign, though it has immensely strengthened the throne for the present, may have unexpected consequences. Whilst it lasts, the country is the happiest of republics, enjoying complete liberty under the presidency of the person most respected

Effect of Personal Character in the King.

Possible Consequence of the Victorian Epoch.

[1] *Memoirs of Mrs. Jameson*, by her niece Gerardine Macpherson, First Edition, p. 154.

in the State. To go back, after that, to a condition of real subjection under a masterful and meddlesome king, is more than the English people would ever be likely to endure. It remains a question, too, whether the country would endure a king who, without being what might be called a tyrant, was simply determined to make his position a reality. Suppose, for example, that instead of being a minister, Lord Salisbury, with his governing instincts, had been king. He would have attempted to control many things, but would the loyalty of the country have borne the strain? What thoughtful English people say now in private, amounts to this: that the Queen will certainly remain undisturbed, that her son will probably have a quiet reign, and reap the fruits of his unsparing personal work, but that beyond him nothing is known. The old positive certainty about the duration of the monarchy in England, whatever the quality of the monarch, has given place to personal considerations.

Possible Results of an Authoritative Reign.

Personal Considerations.

There is another possibility that may lead to anything but settled rest and peace. The country may divide itself into two extreme parties: the advocates of a really strong monarchy, with an active, ruling king, may be opposed to a vigorous radical party that would then be openly republican. If ever this should come to pass, it is hard to see how civil disturbance could be avoided. A determined sovereign, under such circumstances, might proclaim himself Emperor, not only of India, but of Great Britain, and the Gladstone of the day might answer that move by bold republicanism in the House of Commons.

A Future Radical Party.

The future of France has now rather better prospects of stability, or might have them, if the effects of the next

The Future of France.

war with Germany were not so difficult to foresee. The reason is not because the French are less fickle than the English, but simply because they have got through more of the long revolutionary process, so that the new order is more under the protection of popular conservative instincts. There is also a strong desire for rest, a weariness of change after the most disturbed century of the national existence. The single wish of the people is to pursue their avocations in peace, and if the plain truth must be told, they have no longer the old capacity for political enthusiasm. The genuine royalist sentiment is almost extinct; if it lingers at all, it is only in a few aristocratic families, and hardly even in these since the death of Henri V. deprived it alike of object and aliment. Even the Count of Paris himself does not reverence the Divine Right of royalty in his own person, since he condescends to bid against the Bonapartists for democratic acceptance.

Present Desire for Rest in France.

Extinction of the Royalist Sentiment.

On the other hand, the republican sentiment, though resolute as to the preservation of republican forms, has certainly become wonderfully cool. The coolness of the young men is especially remarkable and significant. They are mostly republicans, it is true, and have no belief in the possibility of a monarchical restoration, but the more intelligent of them see the difficulties and the defects of a republican government very plainly, and they have a tendency to dwell upon those difficulties and defects in a manner that would astonish the militant republicans of the past. This composed and rational temper is the state of mind that comes upon all of us after the settled possession of an object, and it is a *sign* of settled possession. I myself have known two genera-

Coolness of French Republican Sentiment.

Coolness of the Young.

Coolness a Sign of settled Possession.

tions of French republicans, the ardent, hopeful, self-sacrificing men who looked forward, as from the desert to the promised land, and now their sons, for whom the promised land has the incurable defect of being no longer ideal.

Reason for the Probable Duration of the Democracy.

Democratic institutions may vary in their form and still remain democratic. I should not venture to predict eternal duration for the present French republican forms, but I believe that the democracy will last, if only because it is inconceivable that an aristocracy should ever destroy it and take its place. The strong popular conservative tendency which has been already noticed may possibly preserve both the senate and the presidence. Sir Henry Maine had a very contemptuous estimate of the position of a French president, whose position he considered "pitiable." That is merely an example of the English habit of despising, already alluded to. If the position of president were "pitiable," it would not be so much coveted by the leading politicians. In dignity it is inferior, no doubt, to that of a great king, but it is superior to the minor royalties. In influence it is enough to say that it is superior to that of a merely ceremonial monarch, because the president presides over councils of ministers, and is, in fact, himself a permanent minister, or the only minister with any approach to permanence. It is not surprising that a constitutional sovereign should manifest a constant unwillingness to read speeches composed by others, to be afterwards criticised in Parliament with utter disregard of the royal name that covers them. A French president is at least permitted to write his own messages, which are the expression of his own opinions. The greatest function of a French president is a very lofty and

Sir Henry Maine. His Contemptuous Estimation of a French President.

Influence of a French President.

noble one. It is to smooth asperities, to diminish the bad effect of political dissension, and to be watchful of the interests of the country. He has also a direct and immediate influence on foreign affairs, which has already proved useful on more than one occasion. These are reasons why the office may possibly be maintained, but there is another reason that affects the estimation of the republic in rural districts. The country looks to the president with satisfaction as the nearest approach to permanence that a democratic constitution can admit. What Bagehot said of the Queen twenty years ago is in a great measure true of the French president to-day. Amidst the frequent changes of ministers he is comparatively stable. The peasants follow with difficulty the names of successive ministers, but they all know the name of the president, and his portrait is seen everywhere. Their belief about the president is that he is a respectable, trustworthy man: "C'est un brave homme, Mossieu Grévy (or Carnot, as the case may be), je le crois b'en, moi." Is that nothing? It is not the Russian's adoration of the Czar, nor the German's affection for old Kaiser Wilhelm, but it is an element of tranquillity in the State.

# PART IV

## RELIGION

# CHAPTER I

## STATE ESTABLISHMENTS OF RELIGION

AN established religion is a religion under the especial protection of the Government, and which is held to be national, at least in this sense, that it represents the nation before the throne of God.

Degrees of Nationality in Established Religions.

There are, however, very different degrees of nationality in the religions themselves. Thus, to establish our first comparison between France and England, there is no religion whatever in France which is so national as the Anglican Church.

Subjection of Clergy to the State.

The clergy of the Church of England are in all things subject to the Queen, or to speak more accurately to Parliament. The bishops have exactly that degree of authority in their dioceses which Parliament allows them, and no more. Even in matters of doctrine and ritual the clergy are subject to the secular power. They are so entirely national that outside of the nation they have no earthly protector to appeal to. They might be despoiled of their possessions and privileges without calling forth so much as a remonstrance from any foreign potentate, and without arousing the slightest sympathy outside of the Anglo-Saxon race. They have a beautiful liturgy, but it is in English, and appreciated only by English

Anglicanism on the Continent.

readers. On the continent the Church of England wins hardly any proselytes, and can scarcely be said to exist except for British embassies and tourists.

Intense Nationality of Anglicanism.

No institution can be more intensely national than the Church of England. She is national by the very qualities that have made her unsuccessful abroad. She is national because she answers so exactly to the character and disposition of Englishmen, and particularly of Englishwomen. It is as fitting that she should be the established Church, so long as any established religion is held to be necessary, as it is that the national customs in food and dress should be the national customs.

Absence of a National Church in France.

In France we find no Church whatever that has this decided and peculiar character of nationality. France is said to be Catholic in the sense that the majority of the people profess the Roman Catholic religion, and it certainly does appear that this faith answers more nearly to the wants of French people than any other. Still, the

International Character of French Priesthood.

French clergy is not national, it is *inter*national, it is nearer to the Roman Catholic priesthoods of Spain and Austria than it is to the French laity. Its head is not a Frenchman living in France but an Italian living in Italy, and its liturgy is in a foreign tongue. It accepts all Papal decisions, and it does not accept the decisions of the French Government. It looks with reverence to the Vatican, and without reverence to the Palais Bourbon and Elysée. Even in the use of words it follows a foreign authority. The French Government has recognised the kingdom of Italy, and has an ambassador at the court of Rome. The pope has not recognised the King of Italy, but calls him the King of Piedmont. Less French than ultramontane, the clergy

speak of the Italian Government as "le gouvernement Piedmontais."

British and French Systems of Establishment contrasted.

Another most essential difference between Great Britain and France with regard to State establishments of religion is that, although the British Government may have one establishment in one of the countries under its control and another in another country, it does not establish more than a single form of religion in the same place. Thus Anglicanism may be established in England and Presbyterianism in Scotland, whilst some politicians would have consented to the establishment of Roman Catholicism in Ireland; but no British statesman whatever would think of establishing the three religions *together* in all parts of the United Kingdom.

Co-establishment in France.

In France we find *co*-establishment, which is quite unknown in England. In France there are four State religions all established together, their ministers being paid by the State.

Change from Monarchical to Republican form of Government.

The change from a monarchical to a republican form of government has an influence on national religion in this way. In a monarchy the faith of the royal family is in a certain sense national even though there may be other faiths amongst the people, for when the sovereign prays for the nation he is, in a peculiar sense, its religious representative. This idea of the king representing the nation before the throne of God has come down to us from the most remote antiquity, and is as natural and inevitable as the leadership of the father of a family in domestic worship. It follows from this that the religion of the king is in a special sense the national religion, even though others may be protected by the State, and, so long as the English monarchy shall endure, the

A King a Religious Representative.

religion professed by the monarch can never be a matter of indifference.

In France the monarchy is at an end, and a republic has taken its place with a chief magistrate, who is a mere temporary official, who is not obliged to profess any religion whatever, and who has nothing august or sacred in his position like a Sovereign crowned and consecrated at Westminster or Rheims. To whom then are we to look as the religious representative of the nation? To the Archbishop of Paris? He is but the chief priest of one established religion out of four. To the minister of public worship? He has no religious function and is only an administrator. To the presidents of the Senate or the Chamber? They never, on the most important occasions, say any public prayers.

Absence of a National Representative of Religion in the French Republic.

France, then, is a country where four religions are established in the sense of being protected and paid by the State, but not one of them is peculiarly the French religion as Anglicanism is the English religion.

Religious Indifference of Legislators.

The truth is that co-establishment is clear evidence of indifference on the part of the legislator. In this respect it is almost as significant as the separation of Church and State, and is indeed accepted as an alternative to that radical measure. Both are suggested by the desire for equality, which may be attained either by disestablishing the dominant creed, or by establishing the creeds of minorities, and this could be done in France more easily than in England, because the minor sects were few. By paying the ministers of two Protestant sects, and also the Jewish rabbis, the French legislator was able to satisfy nearly all his countrymen who do not belong to the Church of Rome. The priests of other religions would

Effects of the Desire for Equality.

be paid, on the same principle, if their services were called for. In the lyceum at Marseilles a Pope of the Greek Church is paid as a chaplain along with the Catholic *aumônier*.

This solution of the difficulty has been found to answer in practice in our time, though it is not likely to be permanent. All thinking Frenchmen are aware that it contains a contradiction which is this. The State pays Catholic priests for affirming the real presence, and then pays Protestant ministers for denying it. The State pays Catholic and Protestant for declaring that Christ was God, and then pays Jews for saying that he was not God.

Contradiction involved in the System of Co-establishment.

To this a French statesman would probably reply that from the lay point of view this is the wisest policy. He would say, "It is lucky that we have got the Protestants and the Jews as a perceptible counter-weight to the Catholics, and one can only regret that they are not more numerous. We do not want a single overwhelmingly powerful priesthood. The ideal state of things would be half a dozen sects of nearly equal strength, either paid alike or without endowment." In a word, the French policy in religious matters approaches very nearly to a neutral policy.

Use of a Multiplicity of Sects.

Is there anything resembling this neutrality in Great Britain? The answer is that the English have not exactly the same thing, but they have another thing that is not wholly unlike it. English statesmen, as we have already seen, will not establish contradictory religions within the limits of England itself, but they do not object to patronise and encourage the most opposite faiths in different parts of the Empire. In this sense the English Government comes near to a certain kind of neutrality,

In what the English kind of Neutrality consists.

and it is on the whole a very tolerant Government, even towards small religious minorities that it does not directly patronise. The Unitarians, for example, though not paid by the State, are never molested now.

When statesmen reach this degree of impartiality, it becomes a question whether the same impartiality might not be equally well expressed by simply protecting every one in the exercise of his own religion, without payment or direct patronage of any kind. In Russia a State Church is evidently a natural institution. The religion of the Czar must be the true religion for the peasant, who is not to suppose that the Czar can be wrong in so important a matter; but with the non-religious character of the French Government and the tolerant character of the English, the idea gains ground that the duty of the State to all creeds is simply protection, and no more. This opens the question of disestablishment, which will be briefly examined in the following chapter.

Modern Idea of the Duty of the State.

## CHAPTER II

### DISESTABLISHMENT IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

THERE are two reasons why the road to disestablishment is plainer in France. The first is the abolition of the monarchy, which takes away the defender of the royal faith. The second is the payment of the clergy by the State. The disestablishment and disendowment of the French Churches would, in practice, be a task of extreme simplicity. Parliament would merely decline to vote the *budget des cultes*, a refusal that may happen any day, and the Churches would be thrown on their own resources. In England there is a vast capital sum to be disposed of, and though it excites cupidity, the parties hostile to the establishment are unable to agree about the employment of it.

Disestablishment more simple in France than in England.

The temper of Englishmen is averse to a sudden change that is carried out all over the country. In France, whatever happens in legislation affects all France; but Great Britain has divisions which conveniently allow of experiments in this field or that, without extending them at once over all the national estate. Thus it may be predicted that when disestablishment takes place in France it will be co-extensive with the frontiers, whilst in Great Britain and Ireland, it was tried at first in Ire-

Effects of Legislation in the two Countries.

land, and will be tried a second time in Scotland or Wales.

Question of Pecuniary Honour in France.

A most important reason why it has not been effected of late years in France is the question of pecuniary honour. The question is this. Can the State honourably refuse to continue annuities which are in fact nothing but the interest of capital taken from the Church by the secular power? This consideration has great weight in a country that takes a just pride in continuing regular payments in spite of the disturbance caused by so many changes of government.

Argument of the Advocates of Disestablishment.

The objection, however, which looks unanswerable at first, is met by the advocates of disestablishment in two ways. First, they say that the property held by the Church in former times was generally ill-gotten, that is, by terrorising the consciences of the credulous; and next, they argue that a corporation is not like an individual or a family.

Then there is an objection, not on the ground of right but of simple policy. "Supposing it possible to confiscate the priests' stipends honourably, would it be wise or prudent to do so?" Whenever they are ill-used, even to a much less degree than that, they immediately proclaim themselves martyrs. If their salaries were withheld there would be an immense display of clerical indigence. The clergy might excite much popular sympathy by appearing as one vast mendicant order, with ragged cassocks, and they would certainly do all in their power to arouse the indignation of the peasantry against the Government. Then they would put a great part of the country under a sort of interdict. Even already the reactionary parties prepare the way for something of this

Probable Policy of the Priesthood.

description by spreading rumours amongst the peasantry. According to these rumours the republic intends to deprive the peasantry of religious rites, so that their children are to remain unbaptized, and their dead are to be buried like dogs. These rumours have frequently reached me through the peasants themselves, and they are generally traceable to the efforts of reactionary candidates during election times. Cautious republicans think that to abolish the *budget des cultes* would be to provide the clergy and the monarchists with a very dangerous weapon. More than this, they believe that if disestablishment is intended to weaken and impoverish the clergy it will have an exactly contrary effect. The Church always gets whatever money she requires. Her power of renewing her wealth after immense losses is founded on the assured support of the rich. Here is a case in point. In consequence of the *laïcisation* of a school a few "brethren of the Christian doctrine" were put out of employment. The curé of the place started a subscription to get a home for them, and in a week he had got together nearly two thousand pounds.[1] Now, for comparison's sake, imagine starting a subscription in the same place for some purpose of secular intellectual culture, such as the encouragement of scientific research or the purchase of prints or casts. You could not, in such a place, scrape together two thousand pence.

Abolition of the *Budget des Cultes*.

The Priests readily procure money.

No one who knows France will venture upon predictions about French affairs. I may, however, indicate certain alternatives which the course of future events can scarcely altogether avoid.

[1] This curé was an acquaintance of mine. His sister-in-law told me the amount of the subscription as an example of clerical influence.

There is the indefinite prolongation of the present system, by which opposite religions are endowed. This may continue for a long time, but it is not likely to last for ever. The annual payment of a tribute to the clergy is, like all tributes, a constantly-recurring vexation. In itself it is enough to revive hostility, which might otherwise pass into indifference. It will not let sleeping dogs lie. If it should ever happen, which is by no means impossible, that the opponents of the *budget des cultes* can unite a small majority, the clergy will open their newspapers one morning and see a brief announcement that their salaries are stopped.

Co-establishment not likely to be permanent in France.

A more probable event is that, according to the proposal of M. Yves Guyot, the State will disembarrass itself of responsibility by handing over the payment to the *communes*. According to this system the money would be given to the municipal council in each commune, to be expended either in the payment of the clergy, or for any other purpose of public utility that the majority of each council might prefer. There could then be no complaint against the Government, which would escape all responsibility. That would fall upon the municipal electors in each commune separately, who would have themselves to thank if they were deprived of religious ministrations.

Project of M. Yves Guyot.

The result of this, in practice, would be a partial and perhaps progressive disestablishment. The clergy would be paid in some communes, perhaps in the majority, but not in others. The change would therefore come without any general shock. This scheme may be agreeable to the numerous enemies of the clergy, who will have the wit to perceive that it offers a kind of bribe to the

Practical Result of M. Guyot's Project.

municipal councils, which are seldom rich, and almost invariably desire to do more than their limited means permit.[1] The more prudent republicans might accept it as affording a ground of complaint less advantageous, polemically, to the clergy.

It is unnecessary for me to go into detail about the question of disestablishment in England. Every English reader knows the present state of that question in his own country, and a few years hence whatever could be written in this book would only be out of date. I may, however, in a book of comparison between the two countries, point to the essential difference between disestablishment in France and England. In France it is desired by the aggressive secular spirit which is doing all it can to *laïcise* the country thoroughly. In England it is the unestablished religious communities that supply most of the motive power, and the spirit which animates them is not the secular spirit at all, but religious and social jealousy.

Difference between Disestablishment in France and in England.

Religious and Social Jealousy.

The use of this word "jealousy" looks like an attack upon the nonconformists, but it is not employed here in a hostile sense. If jealousy is a mental aberration when it makes people see falsely, it is not so when there is no perversion of facts. Nay, there may be circumstances when an awakened jealousy casts a clear light on unpleasant truths which would otherwise escape us. It is not in human nature that communities placed in a position of manifest social inferiority should not be

Dissenters Naturally and Excusably Jealous.

[1] Here is a case well known to me. The income of the commune is 3000 francs, that of the curé about 1000. To offer the free disposal of the curé's income to the municipal council is to offer a great temptation.

jealous of the one community whose predominance makes them inferior. It *is* in human nature that, even when there is no active oppression, the inferior communities should desire a change which would relieve them from a degrading name.

Opinion of Intellectual Free-thinkers.

The intellectual freethinker is not usually, in England, at all eager for disestablishment. The existence of a broadly tolerant State Church is not, from his point of view, a very great hindrance to liberty of thought. What he most dreads is a watchful universal inquisition, in which every man and especially every woman is an inquisitor always ready to examine him as to his opinions, and call him to account for omissions in religious "exercises." A distinguished Englishman of this class, a scientific agnostic, said to me, "It would be a mistake to bring on disestablishment. The Church is more tolerant than the dissenters. The English state of things is more favourable to individual liberty than the American."

## CHAPTER III

### SOCIAL POWER

WHAT I mean by the social power of a religion is the power of enforcing conformity by the double sanction of social rewards and penalties. If the clergy can improve the social position of one who submits to them, and if they can inflict upon the nonconformist any, even the slightest, stigma of social inferiority, then I should say that such a clergy was socially powerful. It would be still more powerful if it did not appear in the matter in any direct way, but was able to attain the same ends through a laity influenced and educated by itself, a laity acting under the illusion of perfect freedom like a hypnotised patient under the influence of "suggestion." The Test of Social Power.

We have seen that there is a plurality of established religions in France, that Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Jews are equally recognised by the State. The political equality of these religions is perfect, but is their social equality of the same kind?

Certainly not. The Church of Rome, having been formerly the one State Church allied for many centuries with the monarchy and the aristocracy, has preserved in these days of nominal equality an almost unshaken social preponderance. Quite independently of the odium at- Absence of Social Equality amongst Religions in France.

tached to Jews, which is as much a question of race as of religion, the Church of Rome has been able, in France, to produce a general impression that a gentleman must be a Roman Catholic, and that a Protestant, though he may follow his religion even more faithfully than most Catholics follow theirs, is not likely to be "*un homme du meilleur monde.*"

The Word "Protestant" in French and English.

If an English boy were told to translate "He is a Protestant" into French, he would probably write "Il est Protestant," and the translation would be accepted as correct. It is technically but not socially accurate. The French word has a *nuance* of social inferiority that the English fails to convey, and when used by a genuine French Catholic it implies in addition a *nuance* of reprobation. Is there any English word that would carry these meanings with it? Certainly there is. The word "dissenter" carries them quite perfectly.

Mr. Voysey.

I remember that Mr. Voysey, the English freethinking clergyman, warned the dissenters some years ago against the idea, illusory according to him, that by disestablishing the Church of England they would attain to social equality. "You will do nothing of the kind," he said, in substance if not in words; "Anglicanism will still be the fashionable religion, and you will be just as unfashionable and inferior as you are at present." Nor is it probable that any mere legislative enactment would procure the abolition of the term "dissenter," any more than of what is implied by it.

Social Weakness of Law.

The Example of France.

France may afford to English nonconformists an excellent opportunity of comparing legal equality with that social inequality which the justice of the law is unfortunately impotent to redress.

The French Protestants form a little world apart, which (except, perhaps, in the most Protestant districts, and they are of small extent) appears to be outside the current of the national life. Just as, in England, you may live in the upper classes for a lifetime without having once been inside a dissenter's house, or seen a dissenter eat, so in France aristocratic people go from the cradle to the grave without having seen the inside of an "evangelical" home. I am not speaking of real religious bigotry, of that evil-spirited intolerance which hates the Protestant as a schismatic, and would revive the old horrible penalties against him if it could; I am speaking only of the mild modern objection to people who are under the ban of a social prejudice.

Isolation of Protestants in France.

A ban of this kind falls with very different effect on different persons. It scarcely troubles elderly people in comfortable circumstances, who are content with a retired life, but it weighs heavily on the young. A Protestant girl in a French country town may have admirable virtues and a good education, but the simple fact that she belongs to an inferior religious community restricts her chances of marriage. In both England and France a young man may suffer both in that and in other ways from his connection with an unfashionable sect. A young Englishman may come to turning-points in his career where an Anglican will be preferred to a dissenter, even although no question of religious belief may avowedly be involved. A valuable office may be given to merit when the qualities of a dissenter would not be taken into consideration. I am thinking of a real instance when a man of great merit received a private appointment which would certainly not have been offered to a non-conformist, yet the work to be done had no connection

Disadvantage of belonging to the Inferior Sects.

Dissenters in England.

Protestants in France.

with theology. In France I know several successful men who, if they had been Protestants, would have been left out in the cold. If this may still be the case in an age that has made such very real advances in justice,

Dissenters in Former Times.

what was it two or three generations since? Then the dissenter was literally an outlaw;[1] to-day he is so only in a social and metaphorical sense. A Frenchman once said to me, "*Un Français qui n'est pas Catholique est hors la loi*," but the law of good society was understood, not the law of the land.

Only a Nominal Orthodoxy required.

In both countries alike, it is but fair to admit that a merely nominal orthodoxy is accepted, and that a man is not required to believe anything in his own intellect and conscience, if he will only conform to certain outward

Facilities of Modern Catholicism.

ceremonies. In France the Church has become so accommodating that it is not now any harder to be a Catholic than a fashionable Anglican. The Church requires hardly anything that can be unpleasant to the upper classes (the fasts are only a variety of good eating), and conformity now consists in little else than attendance at a weekly mass. In some respects French orthodoxy is more compatible with freedom than its English counter-

Liberty of French Catholics.

part. After mass, and an early low mass is sufficient, a French gentleman is free to amuse himself on Sunday as he pleases. There is, indeed, a rather stern French puritanism which objects to theatres on Sunday, but

[1] "'And will not one man in the town help him, no constables—no law?'

"'Oh, he's a Quaker, the law don't help Quakers.'

"That was the truth—the hard, grinding truth—in those days. Liberty, justice, were idle names to nonconformists of every kind; and all they knew of the glorious constitution of English law was that its iron hand was turned against them."—*John Halifax*, ch. viii.

it objects to them equally on all other days of the week.

Aversion to Nominal Heterodoxy

But if a nominal orthodoxy is accepted, a nominal heterodoxy is still regarded with aversion. It is a mere question of names. Here is a case in which the persons concerned were known to me. A young gentleman asks a young Catholic lady in marriage and is accepted. He is perfectly well known to be a freethinker, as he is entirely without hypocrisy, never even going to church. Some enemy sets in circulation a sinister rumour to the effect that he is a Protestant. This might have broken off the marriage if he had not been able to prove his Catholic baptism. If people were to put realities before names, it clearly could not be of any importance to what religion a freethinker nominally belonged when he was a baby. It is not the baby who is to be married, but the man. The anxiety in this case was to avoid the objectionable word "Protestant." The reader may wonder if *libre penseur* would not be infinitely worse. Perhaps, but it is ingeniously avoided by saying, "*Monsieur X est Catholique, mais il ne pratique pas.*"

Names and Realities.

Support given by Unbelievers to Dominant Religions.

It would be an omission to close this chapter without recognising the existence of a quite unforeseen source of strength for dominant and fashionable religions. That is, the *preferential* support of well-educated unbelievers. It is not an active or a visible support, but it exists extensively, and the value of it steadily increases with the growth of cultivated doubt. What the unbeliever most dreads and detests is to be worried by rude religious enthusiasts. He does not dislike a priest or a parson who is discreet, and ready to sink religious differences in personal intercourse; nay, he may even be attracted to

the wise clergyman, as to a man of intellect and education, who has an ideal above the level of the Philistine vulgar. The experienced unbeliever is generally of opinion that discretion and liberality are more likely to be found in an ancient Church that is bound up with the life and experience of the great world, than in the narrower and more inquisitorial strictness of the minor sects. Hence the curious but unquestionable fact, that in England the cultivated unbeliever prefers the Anglican Church to the dissenting bodies, and does not wish to see them become predominant, whilst in France he dislikes the Protestants more than the Romish priests. This preference arises simply from the unbeliever's knowledge of the state of things most conducive to his personal comfort, and has nothing to do with theological doctrines, which are a matter of indifference to him in any case. In France, he especially congratulates himself that the dominant religion is not Sabbatarian, the reason being that Sabbatarianism is much more than a theological doctrine, as it passes so easily into legislative domination over all men.

Discretion and Liberality in the Clergy.

Personal Comfort of Unbelievers.

## CHAPTER IV

### FAITH

THE word "Faith" is used in two different senses. In ordinary language it means little more than a custom or a name. When people say that Napoleon I. belonged to the Roman Catholic faith, they only mean that he bore the name and followed the external customs of that religion, for we know that his own belief was a kind of fatalistic deism. The facility with which some exalted personages have gone from one faith to another, and in some cases have even repeated the change for obviously political reasons, is explicable only by reading the word "Faith" as a custom or a ceremony.

Two senses of the Word "Faith."

The sense in which it will be employed in the following pages is that of sincere inward conviction. Evidently this must be far more difficult to ascertain than those acts of external conformity which are intended to be visible by all. In a world like this, where there is so little moral courage, people are easily browbeaten, easily terrorised, and they have in general such an abject dread of any term implying degradation or disgrace, whilst they are at the same time so keenly alive to the advantages of social advancement, that it seems at first sight impossible to find any sure test of the genuineness of their professions.

How employed here.

The Test of Sacrifice.

There is, however, one sure test, and that is sacrifice. When people make *real* sacrifices for their faith its sincerity is unquestionable. But we must be well on our guard in admitting the reality of the sacrifice. It may seem to be real when it is only a payment for something held to be more valuable than itself. Pecuniary sacrifices prove nothing when the donor gets consideration in return, more valuable to him than superfluous money. It costs no trouble to write a cheque.

Deceptive Nature of Pecuniary Sacrifices.

The Tests of Sincerity.

Personal labour and trouble, *that cannot be delegated to working inferiors*, are the best test of sincerity on the active side. On the passive side, there is the sacrifice of the things that make life pleasant, its comforts and luxuries, and the happiness of home and friendship, and especially the renunciation of worldly ambition.

A Sketch from Life.

Here is a sketch from life. A young French gentleman, the eldest son of a rich man, leaves father and mother and a luxurious home to join one of the teaching orders. The discipline is severe. To begin with, the aspirant must be ordained, and therefore renounces marriage. He also renounces wealth by taking the vow of voluntary poverty, and he gives up his liberty by the vow of obedience. In this instance, the young man went into exile, as his order was one of the unauthorised congregations, and he sacrificed health because the discipline was more than his delicate frame could bear. The work to be done, year after year, is tedious. Imagine a rich and cultivated young gentleman doing usher's work in a poor school for less than usher's pay, indeed for no pay, expect a providing of the barest necessaries! The separation from home and family, without being absolutely complete, as in some orders, is nearly so. Rarely, very rarely,

Renunciations.

the teacher revisited his old home, where his place knew him no more.

I have talked with his father about the immensity of this sacrifice. The father (who is himself a profoundly religious man) feels unable to conceive adequately the strength of a man's natural will, that can carry out such a sacrifice through life, and accounts for it by the supposition (in his own mind a certainty) that the devotee receives an unfailing supernatural support. It is, at any rate, clear evidence of genuine faith.

Explanation by Supernatural Support.

In the feminine world we find many examples of sacrifice at least equivalent to this. Not a week before I write this page the daughter of a neighbouring farmer came to say good-bye to us. She belongs to the best class of French peasants, is a comely, well-grown, healthy girl, and might easily have married. She has chosen rather to join a teaching Order, and an Order that is principally employed in the French colonies. It is an austere and hard life that she has before her, and it is highly improbable that she will ever revisit her old home. This case also is evidently one of genuine conviction.

Case of a Peasant Girl.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples. It is not the splendour of the Papacy or the episcopate that is the true glory of the Church of Rome, but the steady and modest devotion of her working Orders. What is more beautiful than the life of a Sister of Charity or a "Little Sister of the Poor"? Good Catholics call them "My Sister" when speaking to each of them individually, and so do I who am not a Catholic, for are they not sisters of all of us who may be laid one day on a bed of sickness? If we do not need their gentle watching for ourselves, it soothes our suffering brethren.

The Working Orders in the Church of Rome.

And what a dull monotonous existence many of them accept! What tiresome and even repulsive duties they go through without flinching! I know a house kept by some "Little Sisters," where there are eighty old paupers entirely fed and tended by them. The "Little Sisters" go about begging for remnants of food with a small van, and they never eat anything themselves until they have fed their eighty poor. Two or three of the Sisters do the washing. They are in the washhouse from morning till night to keep the old folks clean. Have I ever done as much?—have you? Till we have sacrificed our own ease and comfort in this way, or in some way equivalent to this, the next best thing we can do is to respect such self-sacrifice in others. One of these "Little Sisters" in the house I know remained humble and unknown like the rest, but when she was gone we learned by accident that she was of princely rank.

The "Little Sisters of the Poor."

Maxime du Camp has studied the charitable self-sacrifice of women belonging to the higher classes. The abundant facts that he collected were not a surprise for me, but if any English reader happens to retain the old prejudice that all Frenchwomen are frivolous he ought to read du Camp's evidence.

Evidence collected by Maxime du Camp.

The active sisterhoods are repaid to some extent in this world by a beneficent law of human nature. They have one remarkably uniform characteristic; they seem to be invariably cheerful, with bright moments of innocent gaiety. This serenity of mind may be explained naturally without having recourse to miracle. It is gained by the ever-present sense of duties accomplished in the past and the determination to face

Cheerfulness a Characteristic of the Active Sisterhoods.

them in the future. It is the spirit that inspired Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty" with a health surpassing all songs of love and wine.

These are instances of the saintly nature in practice. I remember a very dear Roman Catholic friend of mine, a Frenchman, asking me if I thought it possible that the saintly nature could develop itself under the influences of Protestantism. It seemed to him that Protestantism must check its heroic spirit and bring it down to the commonplace. I answered that the purest example of the saintly nature I had ever known was an Anglican lady. She belongs to no order and is nothing but a lonely old maid, who has taken all who suffer to be her sisters and brethren. She gives them the whole of her time, the whole of her strength, and all her money except what is reserved for a bare subsistence. She spends seven shillings a week on her own food and lodgings, and as for dress, she is content with anything that will cover her.[1] For perfect courage she is as good as any Catholic saint in the calendar. There is no malady so repulsive or so contagious that she will not cheerfully nurse the patient. These practices are by no means of recent adoption. The lady in question has been leading a saint's life for twenty or thirty years. The intensity of her religious belief reaches the limits of hallucination.

The Saintly Nature in Protestantism.

An Anglican Saint.

Life of an Anglican Saint.

[1] This excellent lady went on a visit to an old friend, who found her appearance so miserable that she took the liberty of clothing her from head to foot. The saint was *aware* that she had been clothed, but neither pleased nor offended. She only laughed, and I believe her secret satisfaction in the matter was that she could give the old clothes to some beggar. I hope, but feel by no means sure, that she did not give away the *new* ones, which were a surprising improvement to her appearance.

Like Joan of Arc, she hears the angels sing. Whenever a good Christian dies she is filled with a serene joy, thinking only of the glad new birth in heaven. Like Sister Dora, she has strong physical health, and can therefore forget the body as the rich need not think of money. Her existence is almost angelic already; she lives in a sort of ecstasy, and is as ignorant of this world as a cloistered nun. Had she been a Roman Catholic she would have attained to papal beatification.

Romanism and Anglicanism with regard to the Saintly Life.

This example is good evidence that the saintly nature may flourish in perfection outside the Church of Rome, though the fact remains that Roman Catholicism *encourages* the development of that character beyond the limits of reason, whilst the cooler faith of Anglicanism does not encourage it so far. It is therefore not improbable that saints of the heroic type are more common in France than in England.

Religious Work in Common Life.

When we come to religious work done in common life by people without the special saintly vocation, there may be as much of it in England. Many of my readers will be acquainted with English people who quite unostentatiously give time and labour to the lower classes, either directly in the service of Christianity or simply in behalf of civilisation against barbarism. I know a busy

An Anglican Layman.

English layman who gives a whole day every week, besides one or two evenings, to Christianising work, often sacrificing necessary rest. He is remarkably free from cant of all kinds, and opposed to asceticism. Such examples remain almost unknown, and may therefore be more numerous than we suspect, but it is not usually the male sex that does the most work of this kind. At a time when a book of mine called *Human Intercourse* was

published, an Anglican clergyman wrote me a friendly letter, in which he pointed to a special reason for the intimate alliance between "priests and women" in works requiring time and trouble. He said (in effect if not in words) that the clergy would as willingly appeal to men if they were likely to find in them co-adjutors equally zealous, but that men are comparatively useless.[1]

A Good Reason for the Alliance between Priests and Women.

To this I felt inclined to answer, in defence of the irreligious sex, that men have commonly too much on their minds in business to leave them much liberty for religious undertakings. Besides this, independently of all questions of faith, the feminine nature is kinder than ours, and more disposed to beneficent interference.

It shocks a Catholic to be told that a Protestant may have strong and saintly faith, and it equally shocks a Protestant to be told that strong faith may be the ruling motive of an unbeliever in Christianity, yet it may be so. If we admit self-sacrifice as evidence of faith in one case, we must admit it equally in another. There is nothing so galling to human nature as the loss of social place and consideration, and it is usually in that form that unbelievers have learned the hardship of sacrifice. It requires immense faith in the ultimate value of veracity to express an unfashionable opinion.

Faith outside of this Creed or that.

Faith in the Value of Veracity.

Now, this kind of faith has been by no means rare in France during the last hundred years. Much of the old spirit of faith, once exclusively religious, has transferred

[1] "Her faith through form is pure as thine,
*Her hands are quicker unto good.*"
*In Memoriam.*

Faith transferred from Religion to Politics.

itself in France to political and social convictions. The democratic idea is not without its saints and martyrs, who have been willing to sacrifice all the comforts of existence for a belief and a hope detached from any personal success.

## CHAPTER V

### FORMALISM

THE distinction between formalism and hypocrisy in religion is, that the formalist follows a custom without setting up any claim to depth or sincerity of conviction, whilst the hypócrite falsely pretends to be full of godliness and zeal. Distinction between Formalism and Hypocrisy.

There is probably not a religion in the world that presents so large a proportion of formalists and so few complete hypocrites as the Anglican. Decorous obedience to all outward religious observances is very frequently combined in England with an entire absence of pretension to sanctity. The gentlemanly Englishman is a regular attendant at church, he does not forget to say grace at dinner, but he dislikes cant of all kinds, and it is a part of his habitual reserve to say nothing about his religious experiences. His observance of form is so perfect that you may be acquainted with him for many years without knowing what he really thinks. About politics he is open enough, but he makes you feel that it would be indiscreet to ask for any confidences on religion, it would be like asking for his opinion of his wife. He, on his part, is too well bred to betray any anxiety for the state of your own soul; he is not a member of the Salvation Formalism in the Anglican Communion. The well-bred Anglican.

Army, and your eternal welfare is not any concern of his.

The Formalist and his Conscience.

Who shall fix precisely the exact place at which formalism ends and real hypocrisy begins? The formalist has a sort of conscience which forbids him to go much beyond strictly ceremonial limits. He will seem to use his prayer-book in church, yet will sometimes shrink from reading prayers aloud in his own home. He would listen respectfully if a chaplain read them, but declines to do it with his own voice. I remember one excellent father of a family who had no objection to take his children to church, but nothing could induce him to conduct family worship, and in that household the wife and mother was the chaplain. Still, this is not any certain test.

Case of an English Atheist.

An English gentleman once told me that he had been a convinced atheist from boyhood, yet he went to church with unfailing regularity, and read family prayers like a clergyman. Are we to call this formalism or hypocrisy? I will leave the gentleman to make his own defence. He said that he was absolutely compelled to conform to the national religion externally, and might as well make his conformity thorough, the more so that it was natural for a family to have a religion, and he knew of none better than the Church of England.

Scotchmen and Dissenters.

The true English formalist looks upon the Scotch and the Dissenters as more frequently exposed to the vice of hypocrisy than he is himself. He is so careful to keep anything resembling piety out of his ordinary language that it seems to him ill bred in a Scotchman to make pious reference to the Scriptures or the Sabbath Day. On the other hand, he unfeignedly disapproves of the continental Sunday, because forms are not so steadily

observed on the Continent, and it seems to him as if the French and Germans did not know how to behave.

Formalism in France.

Now with regard to formalism in France I should say that in the upper classes, where it exists in the greatest force, it is even more a matter of ceremonial usage than in England. Has the reader ever observed French gentlemen in church? How many of them have any appearance, even, of taking part in the service! They are present for the most part as spectators of a "function" only—they support it by their presence, by their respectful deportment, and that is all.

French Gentlemen.

French formalism has taken its last and most determined stand on marriages and funerals. Here it is strongly sustained by the general sentiment that a ceremony is needed on such important occasions, and the Church of Rome understands ceremony so well that she gives complete satisfaction to this instinctive need. Quite independently of special theological tenets, it is felt that marriage requires some kind of blessing or consecration, and that a solemn pomp should accompany the dead man to his grave.

French Marriages and Funerals.

I remember being in a room with a number of Frenchmen when the conversation turned upon funerals. "You will all of you," I said, "be buried with the ceremonial of the Church of Rome, and there is not one of you who is really a Catholic or even a Christian, except in the sense that you believe Jesus to have been a good man. Why this clinging to ceremonies that have lost their meaning for you? Why not be buried with rites in accordance with your convictions?" An old lawyer made himself the spokesman of the party in reply. He said, "The disposal of our remains is almost invari-

Religious Interments of French Unbelievers.

ably decided by the ladies of the family, who abominate civil interments. Besides this, many Frenchmen are neither convinced Catholics nor convinced unbelievers either, so they cling to established forms." I then referred the question to a lady in connection with a recent Catholic interment of a sincere unbeliever, and she answered that the ceremony, being a matter of usage, really implied no affirmation whatever concerning the faith of the dead man, but was the only way of doing him a little honour, as none of those present would have dared to attend a civil burial.[1]

Philosophical Anglicanism.

One of the most interesting of comparisons between England and France in the present day is suggested by philosophical Anglicanism, but before seeking for the French equivalent we need some definition of the English original.

Its Mental Freedom.

It appears to be a condition of absolute mental

A Civil Funeral.

[1] Hardly any one with the least pretension to rank or station, unless he might be some republican functionary, would venture to attend a civil interment in a French provincial town. A lady who knows the interest I take in these matters, wrote me a letter in March 1886, from which I make the following extract :—

"Il vient de passer sous mes fenêtres un convoi de la Libre Pensée, ce titre étant brodé en lettres d'argent sur tous les côtés du corbillard, qui est très beau avec ses franges d'argent. Une très grosse couronne d'immortelles rouges est placée sur le cercueil, et tous les assistants en portaient à la boutonnière. Le convoi marchait très lentement, très silencieusement. Que de méchants propos se disaient sur le passage du cortège! Nous n'avons pas encore le droit à l'indépendance. Il faudra bien des années pour que nous ayons notre libre arbitre sans être calomniés."

Insults addressed to a funeral procession are immensely significant in France, where so much outward respect is usually paid to the dead.

freedom, a freedom fully equal to that enjoyed by M. Renan, for example, combined with adhesion to all Anglican forms and a clinging to the Anglican name. The philosophical Anglican criticises the sacred texts, has no respect for dogmas, and expresses his own opinions in language of refreshing candour and frankness, yet at the same time he will *not* be called a dissenter, and is certainly not a nonconformist. He has his seat in church with the motto "*J'y suis et j'y reste.*"

Opinions held by different Philosophical Anglicans.

The opinions of a philosophical Anglican are individual, and so much his own that we cannot justly attribute any one set of opinions to two men, each of whom would repudiate responsibility for the other. Some opinions appear to be what we should once have called Unitarian, others belong to pure Deism, and the more advanced to scientific Agnosticism, in which the existence of a conscious and thinking Deity seems doubtful and the continuity of life beyond the grave a dream. As for the old dogmas, they are treated as the subjects of past controversies. The Trinity and the Incarnation have gone the way of the Real Presence,[1] though we may still retain for them a kind of imaginative credence like that which, in reading Tennyson, we have for the Holy Grail.

Their Treatment of Dogma.

Difference between Philosophical Anglicanism and ordinary Formalism.

Philosophical Anglicanism differs from ordinary formalism in this, that whereas the ordinary formalist is condemned to life-long silence because he dares not say what he thinks, the philosophical Anglican, whilst accepting all the forms like the other, has assumed complete

[1] For Mr. Arnold the Trinity was "the fairy tale of the Three Supernatural Men."

liberty of utterance. In short, he is a formalist who is tired of being gagged. How he reconciles his liberty of thought and speech with the old submission to forms and names it is not my business to explain. The remarkable peculiarity of the case, and its special interest, is that in the leaders of the movement there is no hypocrisy. Even Mr. Tollemache, who admits a certain *ésotérisme inévitable*, takes away that ground for the accusation of hypocrisy by putting the secret into print. All is clear and above-board with the leaders, but it may be suspected that with many of their followers the *ésotérisme inévitable* is carried so far in prudence that their position is not morally different from that of the everyday English formalist, already so familiar to us. Therefore, in spite of the really admirable honesty of Mr. Arnold and Mr. Tollemache, I am not sure that the movement is favourable to honesty in the rank and file, who will not feel under the same obligation to take mankind into their confidence. And with respect to the clergy the examples of Dean Stanley and Mark Pattison are even less encouraging, since in their case the *ésotérisme inévitable* must assume still larger proportions. What they thought I do not profess to know, as we have not any clear and brief statement of their views, but they were certainly freethinkers in the sense of not being deterred by dogma. Subject to correction from their admirers, I should say that their opinions did not differ essentially from those of Renan. They may have accepted the *moral* side of the Christian religion, but even in that they would probably reject what obviously belonged to an early stage of civilisation. The danger of their example consists in encouraging a class of free-

Honest Frankness of the Leaders.

Followers probably not so Frank.

Philosophical Anglicanism amongst the Clergy.

thinking clergymen, who must necessarily defend an essentially false position by the most disingenuous arts.

Most of my English readers will have their own opinion on these phases of English thought, and will care more to hear whether there is anything corresponding to them in France. The answer that first suggests itself is that Liberal Protestantism as represented by M. Réville[1] is the French form of the same thing, but a little reflection shows that Liberal Protestantism differs from philosophical Anglicanism in having no social importance. It is something like an advanced development of Unitarianism in England, which would not disturb English society in the least. If Mr. Arnold had been professedly a Unitarian, his announcement of advanced views would have interested a small sect; but as he professed Anglicanism and was an influential leader of opinion, his thoughts interest all who belong, really or nominally, to the National Church. A French Arnold would have to arise within the pale of the Church of Rome, where his career as a reformer would shortly come to an end.

Liberal French Protestantism.

The nearest French equivalent for philosophical Anglicanism is the theory that the religion a man professes is a matter of heredity in his family, and that as an individual he takes what he likes of it and no more. This theory differs, however, from philosophical Anglicanism in one important point—*it is never published to the world.* When expressed at all, which happens very seldom, it is expressed in the privacy of conversation, but the tacit acceptance of it is very wide. The genuine

Nearest French equivalent to Philosophical Anglicanism.

[1] This is a religion entirely without dogma, and Christian only in the sense that it would cultivate a Christian spirit.

The Genuine Catholics.

Catholics insist, on the contrary, that "all or nothing" is the one immutable principle of their religion, and that he who disbelieves the minutest detail of the Catholic dogmas is no more a Catholic than if he professed Protestantism openly.[1] However this may be, the fact remains, that any Frenchman who conforms externally to the Church of Rome is counted as a Catholic from the social point of view. I need not expatiate upon the convenience of the theory that the doctrines of the Church are like a banquet offered, of which the guest may take only what his appetite demands. We most of us accept *something* that might be called a Catholic doctrine, if only that it is wrong to steal.

External Conformity in France.

Jesuitism.

Besides this lax idea amongst laymen, there is the influence of Jesuitism amongst the clergy. The Jesuits are said to confess the *ésotérisme inévitable* of a great popular religion so frankly that the modern intellectual man may find complete liberty in the Church of Rome. It appears that by an ingenious manner of presenting them all Roman Catholic doctrines may be made capable of a liberal interpretation in order that the modern thinker may remain within the fold.[2] Even the very spirit of

Liberty in the Church of Rome.

[1] I have even known a sincere and severe Catholic who told me that no one who disobeyed habitually the moral law, whatever his beliefs, could be a Catholic. Giving drunkenness as an example, he said that there had never been such a person as a Catholic drunkard, because by the mere fact of being a drunkard a man proved that he was not a Catholic.

[2] How much intellectual liberty is now enjoyed within the Roman pale may be seen in Mr. Mivart's most interesting article on "The Catholic Church and Biblical Criticism" published in *The Nineteenth Century* for July 1887. Mr. Mivart does not think it probable that a line of the Bible was written by Moses,

Mr. Mivart.

Catholicism is ready to adapt itself to his taste. If he dislikes an intolerant spirit, the Church becomes most tolerant. He is told that all sincere men who endeavour to do right are sure of salvation, whatever may be their religious belief. If it is painful to him to think that the damned are suffering eternal torture, he is soothed by the assurance that the flames of hell are a figure of speech, and that the real punishment of the damned is only regret for their misdeeds, and privation of the sight of God, two evils that all Christians suffer from in this present world without finding it unendurable.

Pliability of Modern Catholicism.

The success of what is called "Ritualism" in England has some connection with the increase of formalism, though we ought to remember that the formal spirit attaches itself quite as readily to a plain and simple ceremonial as it does to a splendid and elaborate one. The etiquette about plain black cloth for the masculine evening costume is quite as severe as it would be for coloured velvets and embroidery, whilst the modern white tie is more rigidly formal than the lace cravat of

Formalism in Simplicity.

whilst it is "in the highest degree unlikely that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob ever really existed, and no passage of the history of any one of them is of the slightest historical value in the old sense." The book of Jonah is a parable, that of Daniel quite untrustworthy and little more than a mass of fiction. With regard to the Deluge Mr. Mivart says, "I well recollect dining at a priest's house (in or about 1870) when one of the party, the late accomplished Mr. Richard Simpson of Clapham (a most pious Catholic and weekly communicant), expressed some ordinary scientific views on the subject of the Deluge. A startled auditor asked anxiously, 'But is not, then, the account in the Bible of the Deluge true?' To which Mr. Simpson replied, 'True! of course it is true. There was a local inundation, and some of the sacerdotal caste saved themselves in a punt, with their cocks and hens.'"

our ancestors; in fact, the simpler the costume the stricter the rule. The dress of French peasants is much more formal, in the sense of being governed by rigid custom, than the far more varied dress of the upper classes. We find formal strictness going with simplicity in the Anglican vestments before the days of ritualism, and extreme liberty of artistic design permitted by the Church of Rome in the ornamentation of mitre, chasuble, and cope. When Leo XIII. received many thousand chasubles as jubilee gifts, it is probable that there were not two of them alike. Again, in matters of usage it is quite as much a form to put incumbent, curate, and clerk in tiers one above another as to assign to them any other places that might be fixed by the ritual. Therefore, between one form and another, one costume and another, there is little difference as to the reality of formalism. The difference is in the degree of attention given to the matter. Just at first, when a more splendid ritual is adopted, as it has been by some Anglican clergymen, the change may be evidence of a formal spirit, but the same splendours would signify little or nothing if they were traditional and familiar.

Liberty in Variety.

Variety of Roman Vestments.

Old-fashioned Anglican Formalism.

Effect of Use and Habit.

No Ritualistic Party in France.

This marks the difference between England and France with regard to ritual. In England it has recently been a subject of controversy and of conscious attention, whereas in France the instinct that desires it has always been abundantly satisfied by the Church of Rome, so that there has been no thought about it, and there is no such thing as a consciously ritualistic party. The gorgeous Roman ritual is enjoyed by those who have the instinctive need of it, whilst most people, even unbelievers, consider it natural in a great religion. The ultra-simplicity

of French Protestantism is certainly not natural. It is an intentional contrast due to the effect of schism; it is dogmatic dissent expressing itself by external dissimilarity. Simplicity of French Protestantism.

All varieties of formalism have one quality in common, that the strength they give to religion is not vital, it is only social and external. They have a weakening effect upon faith, even in the faithful. Formalism lowers the temperature, not on one side only, but all round it, like an iceberg floating in the sea. Its disapproval of dissent is accompanied by a chilling want of sympathy with religious earnestness and zeal. Formalism is to faith what etiquette is to affection; it is merely taste, and it is quite as much a violation of taste to have the motives of a really genuine, pious Christian, and avow them (in religious language, "to confess Christ before men"), as it is to abstain from customary ceremonies. In short, formalism is the world with its usages, substituting itself for Jesus and his teaching; it is "good form" set up in the place of enthusiastic loyalty and uncalculating self-devotion. Chilling Effect of Formalism. Formalism only Taste.

# PART V

## VIRTUES

# CHAPTER I

## TRUTH

THE Special Committee of the London School Board issued a report in the early part of the year 1888, in which it declared that "fearless truth, bravery, honour, activity, manly skill, temperance, hardihood," were objects of national education.

Novelties in Education.

Some of these are very remarkable novelties in education, and if such a scheme should ever be carried into practice, it will produce unprecedented results. Fearless truth, bravery, and honour (if moral courage is understood to be a part of bravery) have usually been represented in education by their opposites, that is to say, by mental submission, by the timidity of the boy who expects to be browbeaten, and by the hypocritical expression of dictated opinions. The individuality of the boy and his honesty have not been encouraged, but repressed. He has been told what to think and what to say, and even what line of argument to follow, without pausing to consider whether he had any intellect or any conscience of his own. I remember a striking instance of this in the case of a French boy who was preparing an essay as a pupil of the philosophy class in a public school. We talked over the subject of his essay, and I thought he

Repression of Individuality.

Dictated Opinions.

Case of a French Boy.

expressed his opinions, which were also mine, with great cogency and clearness. "There," I said, "you have all that is wanted for your essay; why not say what you think in that manner?" He answered, "If I were to write like that, my essay would not be received, and I should get no marks. On all philosophical questions we are to express the opinions that are determined for us by the traditions of the University, so I shall say the contrary of what I think, and then I shall get marks."

Training in Intellectual Dishonesty.

This training of boys in intellectual dishonesty may be of the greatest value to them in after life, for in real life nothing is so useful to a man as to be able to profess, on occasion, the contrary of what he thinks, but surely it must rob education of all interest even for the educator, seeing that, as he does not hear the truth from his pupils, he can never adapt his reasoning to their case. He does not know their case.

Dread of Liberty of Thought.

"But," it will be objected, "if you allow boys to express their crude opinions, it would be encouraging liberty of thought." No, it would only be encouraging honesty of expression, the "fearless truth," the "honour" of the School Board Committee. There is a happy provision of nature by which freedom of thought is, and always has been, the assured possession of every one who values it, only honesty of expression can be put down. You cannot make boys or men think otherwise than as they do think, but you may train them in habits of dissimulation.

That Liberty ensured by Nature.

Sham Admiration in Literature and Art.

One of the worst of these habits is that of sham admiration in literature and art, and this is a prevalent vice of the French mind. There may be some exceptions, but the general rule is that a Frenchman will profess to

admire what he thinks he ought to admire, even when he has no genuine ardour of admiration at his disposal. The effect is to make conversations with Frenchmen uninteresting so soon as they turn upon famous masters. They will repeat the old laudatory commonplaces, and if you venture upon any criticism with the slightest originality in it, they will look upon you as an insular eccentric. They have been taught at school how to praise the famous men, they have been taught even the proper terms of laudation. I believe the Chinese learn to repeat the praises of their classics in the same way.

A prevalent Vice of the French Mind.

The Chinese.

My own experience leads me to the conclusion that there is less of this sham admiration in England than in France. I grant that the English are often sham admirers of Shakespeare, and that the pretence to appreciate the national poet is not good for the habit of veracity, but I should say that any Englishman who was accustomed to reading would, as a rule, say truly what he thought of modern authors. I would not trust much to his honesty about the Greek and Latin classics, because the admiration of these is mixed up with ideas of culture and of caste. Mr. James Payn says that the habit of literary lying is almost universal in England. The temptation to it is certainly very strong. It is the same temptation that induces painters to over-colour for the exhibitions. Writing which guards and keeps the delicacy of an exquisite honesty, writing which says exactly what the writer feels, and refuses to go beyond his feeling, such writing can rarely appear forcible, especially in comparison with work that is done for force alone without any regard for truth. It will certainly seem weak if it comes after exaggerated writing on the same subject, and it is liable

Less sham Admiration in England than in France.

The Classics.

The Temptation to Literary Lying.

Apparent Weakness of Honest Work.

to be eclipsed at any time by coarser work that may be done afterwards. This is especially the case with regard to the criticism or appreciation of great men. The public likes to hear them loudly praised, and easily acquires a sort of partisan loyalty to their names even when it cares nothing for their work. To offend this partisan loyalty is to set it against ourselves, but there is no risk in judicious lying.

Partisan Loyalty.

Sentence of a Court at Ipswich.

I cannot but think that the sentence of the court at Ipswich on George Frederick Wilfrid Ellis was excessively severe. He was condemned to seven years' penal servitude for having pretended to be a clergyman of the Church of England. For five years he lived as Rector of Wetheringsett, and appears to have given perfect satisfaction in that capacity. He did no perceptible harm in that parish, for even the marriages that he solemnised are valid in English law. He only lied systematically and acted a part to perfection, that was all. But systematic lying is constantly practised by unbelieving laymen who conform outwardly, and they, too, act their part with skill. They may also, like the false Rector of Wetheringsett, often derive great pecuniary advantages from their falsehood, either by getting rich wives or lucrative situations that would be refused to them if their real opinions were known. Yet instead of being condemned to seven years' hard labour as the sham clergyman was, these sham Christians get nothing but rewards for their lying. It becomes, therefore, an important question, in estimating the general truthfulness of a country, whether religious hypocrisy is encouraged in it or not, and to what degree. Is this kind of lying more encouraged in England or in France?

Systematic Lying.

Handsomely rewarded.

Having touched upon this question elsewhere, I need not dwell upon it here, but will give results only, in a few words. There cannot be a doubt that the kind of lying which belongs to outward conformity is, on the whole, a more useful accomplishment in England than in France. Of the extent to which it is practised we know little. Sham Christians pass for real Christians, and bear no outward mark by which they may be detected. It is certain, however, that the English are becoming much more outspoken than they used to be, and that the quality of "fearless truth" is gaining in esteem amongst them, whilst hypocrisy is considered less meritorious. As for the vulgar French idea that all Englishmen are hypocrites, it may be dismissed with the answer that a majority has no motive for hypocrisy, which is the vice of vituperated minorities. And again, with reference to French truthfulness and courage in the expression of heterodox religious opinion, I admire it, and consider it far preferable to hypocrisy and moral cowardice, but at the same time I remember that a Frenchman has less to risk and less to lose by veracity than an Englishman. A Frenchman can with difficulty conceive the force of that quiet pressure which is brought to bear upon an Englishman from his infancy. It is like hydraulic pressure, gentle and slow, but practically irresistible. He is taught and governed in boyhood by clergymen, their feminine allies compel him to go to church and to observe the English Sunday if he intends to marry in England. There is the discipline, too, of the daily family prayers, the Scripture readings, and the discipline of "good form" in conversation. Even the strong-minded Englishman is a little afraid of a clergy-

Value of Hypocrisy in England and France.

"Fearless Truth" gaining in English Estimation.

French Truthfulness.

Power of the English Clergy.

Discipline of Society.

English Fear of the Clergy.

man. I once knew an English officer in Paris, a man of tried courage, who was not proof against this timidity. He possessed in his library a number of heterodox books, but when a clerical brother from England came to stay with him he packed up all that literature and sent it elsewhere for the time, as a boy puts a forbidden volume out of his master's sight.[1]

Political Lying.

Political lying must be very common in both countries, if we accept the testimony of the politicians themselves, for they always tell us that the newspapers opposed to their own are remarkable chiefly for their mendacity. This field of political lying is far too extensive for me to enter upon it. I prefer to confine myself to a few examples of international misrepresentation, as they will throw light upon the general subject of this book. Like political parties, the nations themselves are enemies, and consider it a legitimate part of the chronic warfare that is maintained between them to say whatever may be to each other's disadvantage, provided only that it has a chance of being believed.

International Misrepresentation.

Difference between English and French Lying.

I notice, however, a difference in kind and quality between French and English lying. The French are daring enough, but they are not really clever in the art. They have much audacity, but little skill. They will say what is not true with wonderful decision, and they will stick to it afterwards; but the English surpass them infinitely in craft and guile. The typical French lie is a simple, shameless invention; the typical English lie is not merely half a truth; it is entangled with half a dozen truths, or semblances of truths, so that it becomes most

Superiority of English Craft.

[1] "*L'Angleterre est instruite, élevée, gouvernée par ses clergymen.*"—PHILIPPE DARYL.

difficult to separate them, unless by the exercise of great patience and judicial powers of analysis. Besides this, if the patient analyst came and put the falsehood on one side, and the semblances of truth on the other, the process of separation would be too long, too minute, and too wearisome, for a heedless world to follow him.

French Reliance on Ignorance.

The French writer who publishes a falsehood always relies greatly upon the ignorance of his readers. He is audacious because he believes himself to be safe from detection; or he may be merely reckless in his statements, without intentional mendacity, knowing that any degree of carelessness is of little consequence in addressing his own careless public. The English writer, on the other hand, is aware that *his* public knows a little of everything, though its knowledge is inexact; and he pays some deference to this sort of inexact knowledge by referring to those facts that an indolent and confused memory may retain. His assertions have therefore a sufficiently good appearance both of truth and of knowledge, and they satisfy a public that has some information and a great theoretical respect for truth combined with much critical indolence.

English Reference to imperfect Knowledge.

A French Example.

The first example I shall give is of the reckless French kind. The critic has malevolent feelings towards England (the shadow cast by his French patriotism), and he indulges these feelings to the utmost by writing what is unfavourable to the country he detests, without stopping to inquire if it is true.

Toussenel.

Toussenel is a very popular French author. His name is known to every Frenchman who reads, and he has a great reputation for wit. His book entitled *L'Esprit des Bêtes* appeared first in the year 1847, and is now almost

*L'Esprit des Bêtes.*

a French classic. I find the following paragraph on page 35 of Hetzel's popular edition. After speaking of the horse in past times, Toussenel directs our attention to the present:—

Toussenel on the English Blood-horse.

"Which is the country in Europe where the blood-horse plays the most brilliant part? It is England. Why? The horse continues to reign and govern in England because England is the country of all the world where oppression is most odious and most revolting. There we find a thousand Norman families which possess, by themselves, all the soil, which occupy all posts, and make all the laws, exactly as on the day after the Battle of Hastings. In England the conquering race is everything, the rest of the nation nothing. The English lord esteems his horse in proportion to the contempt he has for the Irishman, for the Saxon, inferior races that he has vanquished by his alliance with his horse. Take good heed, then, that you offend not one hair of the tail of a noble courser of Albion, you who care for your money and your liberty; for the horse is the appanage of the House of Lords, and these Lords have caused the law to declare their horse inviolable and sacred. You may knock down a man with your fist, you may take your wife to market with a halter round her neck, you may trail the wretched prostitute in the mud of the gutter, the daughter of the poverty-stricken artisan whom misery has condemned to infamy. The law of Great Britain tolerates these peccadilloes. For the Norman race of Albion, the English people has never formed part of humanity."

Toussenel on English Law.

What strikes us at once in writing of this kind is the astonishing confidence of the author in the profound ignorance of his readers. The confidence was fully

justified. There are few Frenchmen even at the present day to whom anything in this passage would seem inaccurate or exaggerated. The statement that only the Norman families can be lords and landowners is quite one that the French mind would be prepared to accept, because it implies that England is in a more backward condition than France. I have met with an intelligent Frenchman who maintained that serfdom still exists in England—the serfdom of the Saxon, the serfdom of Gurth and Wamba; and when I happened to mention an English estate as belonging to a certain commoner, another Frenchman, a man of superior culture and gentle breeding, first looked politely sceptical, and then raised the unanswerable objection that in England, as everybody knew, land could only be held by peers. Others will repeat Toussenel's statement that all the public posts (what we call *places*) are held by the nobility.

Norman Families.

Serfdom in England.

Peers the only Landowners.

The kind of falsehood of which Toussenel's statements are an example arises from complete indifference to truth. He pays no attention to it whatever, has no notion that a writer who fails to inform himself neglects a sacred duty, but sets down in malice any outrageous idea that comes uppermost, and then affirms it to be fact.

Toussenel's Kind of Falsehood.

My next example is of less importance, because it is not spread abroad in a famous and permanent book; still, it shows a kind of falsehood that may be dictated by French malevolence. A Frenchman had been staying in England, and on his return to France he told any one who would listen to him that the English have a strange custom—the family bath. All the members of an English family, without regard to sex or age, bathe together every morning in a state of perfect nudity.

The English Family Bath.

Cause of the Lie.

This, I think, is rather a representative specimen of a French lie. It is a pure invention, suggested by anger at the superior cleanliness of the English upper classes, and by a desire to make them pay for their cleanliness by a loss of reputation for decency.

French Mendacity Artless.

English Falsehood Intellectually Superior.

By reckless invention on the one hand, and complete carelessness about verification on the other, the French have accumulated a mass of information about the English which is as valuable as the specimens here given. But there is no real interest in the study of artless French mendacity. It is but the inventiveness of children who say no matter what. It displays no intelligence. English falsehood is incomparably superior to it as an exercise of mental sharpness, and is always worth studying as an inexhaustible subject for the most watchful and interesting analysis. Nothing can surpass the ingenuity with which that marvellous patchwork of truth and its opposite is put together. The intelligent Englishman knows that truth is the most important ingredient in a well-concocted falsehood.

The following example has remained in my memory, and is worth quoting for its concentration. In scarcely more than twenty words it contains three deceptive phantoms of truths, and conveys three false impressions. I found it in an English newspaper of repute, but am unable to give the date. This, however, is in some degree indicated by the passage itself.

An Example of English Falsehood.

"The present atheistical government of France, after expelling the religious orders, has now decreed that the crosses shall be removed from the cemeteries."

Analysis of the Example given.

The adjective "atheistical" is here quietly substituted for the true one, which would be *laïc*. The French

Government is not more atheistic than a board of railway directors. There are four antagonistic established religions in France, and the right to freedom of thought is recognised by law,[1] so that a French Government is necessarily non-theocratic and neutral. French cabinets no more profess atheism than they profess Judaism or Romanism; and since the establishment of the Third Republic they have never shown themselves more actively hostile to the idea of Deity than the Royal Society or any other purely secular institution in London.

French Cabinets *laïc.*

The expression, "after expelling the religious orders," was intended to convey the idea that the religious orders *in general* were expelled *from France*, that being the recognised English view of the Ferry decrees. In reality not a single monk was expelled from France, nor were the orders generally disturbed in any way. The religious orders were classed under two categories,—the authorised, which were recognised by the State, and the unauthorised, which existed only on sufferance. The laws, which required them to ask for "authorisation," had not been passed under the republic but under the monarchy. What happened in 1880 was this. The authorised congregations were left entirely undisturbed. The unauthorised were not expelled from France, but invited to ask for an authorisation, which the Government was disposed to grant in every case except that of the Jesuits. They

The Religious Orders.

What happened in 1880.

[1] An essential difference between France and England. "No one," says Professor Dicey, "can maintain that the law of England recognises anything like that natural right to the free communication of thoughts and opinions which was proclaimed in France nearly a hundred years ago to be one of the most valuable rights of man."—*The Law of the Constitution*, first edition, pp. 257, 258.

declined to ask, in obedience to commands from Rome, the object of which was to place the Government in the position of a persecutor, or compel it to retreat. Ferry would not retreat, and turned the unauthorised congregations out of their houses. This was represented as a persecution of religion; but, in truth, the monks *were treated exactly as French laymen*, for unauthorised associations of laymen were equally illegal, and lay associations were equally obliged to submit their statutes and ask for authorisation.[1] Sir Robert Peel said in 1843, "If a Church chooses to have the advantages of an establishment, and to hold those privileges which the law confers, that Church, whether it be the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, or the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, *must conform to the law.*" The French cabinet was therefore only acting upon a recognised English principle.

Action of the Ferry Cabinet.

Laymen under the same Law.

Sir Robert Peel's Opinion.

We may next examine the statement that the French Government ordered the crosses to be removed from the cemeteries. If the reader does not know the truth he is sure to receive the intended impression that this

Removal of the Crosses from the Cemeteries.

[1] The ordinary law about associations was declared by some English journals to be "obsolete," and revived only for persecution. It was so little obsolete that it was steadily applied to lay associations. I was at one time an honorary member of a French club limited to eighteen in order that an "authorisation" might not be required; and I have been vice-president of another club, not limited in numbers, so that we had to send our statutes to be approved by the prefect, and whenever the slightest change was made in them they had to be submitted again to the same authority. It was a very simple formality, costing three sous for a postage stamp. Had we acted like the unauthorised religious orders, which declined to submit to this not very terrible piece of tyranny, we should have been dissolved as they were, and turned out of our club-house as they were turned out of their establishments.

Law about Associations not Obsolete.

order, emanating from the Government, took effect throughout France. He will receive another impression, well calculated upon, that the crosses *upon the graves* were removed. In fact, this is what the English believed about the matter. What an unholy outrage on Christianity and on the feelings of pious relatives! What a perfect subject for indignant denunciation of republican tyranny and violence! However, English travellers still find the crosses on the graves, and they see the stone-cutters near the cemeteries continually carving new ones under their wooden sheds.

English Belief about it.

The explanation is very simple. The decree did not issue from the French Government at all, but from the town council of a single city—Paris. Even in Paris it had no application to the graves, but referred exclusively to the crosses on the gateways of the Parisian cemeteries. These crosses, which were very few in number, the municipal council decided to remove, because they appeared to indicate that Christians alone (or, perhaps, even Roman Catholics alone) had a right to interment in the public burial-grounds, whereas these were in fact open to Jews and unbelievers as well as to Catholics and Protestants.

The True History about the Crosses.

Now, I would ask the reader to observe in how few words the false impressions are conveyed and how many have been needed for a reply. And how can one count upon the sustained attention necessary for the reception of the truth?

The English newspapers quite succeeded in conveying the impression that the religious congregations were expelled from France, as if they had been sent into exile. Since then there has been a second case of

English Newspapers and French Religious Orders.

The Expulsion of the Princes.

turning-out, and when it occurred I observed with great interest what the English press would make of it and what the English public could be induced to believe. Until the Duke of Aumale wrote an intentionally offensive letter to the President of the Republic, in a form which no Head of a State would have tolerated, only two members of the House of Orleans had been expelled—the Count of Paris and the Duke of Orleans. The

English Perversion of the Truth.

English newspapers, in order to augment the appearance of tyranny on the part of the French Government, had the ingenuity to pervert this into an expulsion of the entire Orleans family, ladies, children, and all. The ladies and children were introduced to win the sympathy of the reader, and arouse his indignation against the republican persecutors. The daily papers announced the expulsion of the Orleans family in capital letters, but the

The Illustrated Journals.

best appeal to sympathy was made by the illustrated journals, which impartially engraved portraits of them all as interesting and illustrious exiles. Nor was this fiction temporary. The false legend which the English people seriously believe has already entered into history. See how neatly and briefly it is inserted in the following

Extract from the *Saturday Review.*

extract from the *Saturday Review* for 9th July 1887: "About the time of the expulsion of himself *and his family* from France, the Count of Paris advised his friends to abandon the practice of indiscriminate opposition." Meanwhile, as a matter of fact, members of the house supposed to be languishing in exile were enjoying full liberty in France, travelling, staying, and receiving any guests they pleased.

English Story about a French Catechism.

In the year 1886 some English newspapers got up an account of a sort of French catechism, using the name of

Mr. Matthew Arnold as an authority. The nature of this catechism may be understood from a speech at the Harvard celebration by Mr. Lowell, who trusted to these statements. Here are Mr. Lowell's words: "Mr. Matthew Arnold has told us that in contemporary France, which seems doomed to try every theory of enlightenment by which the fingers may be burned or the house set on fire, the children of the public schools are taught, in answer to the question, 'Who gives you all these fine things?' to say, 'The State.' Ill fares the State in which the parental image is replaced by an abstraction."

Children in the French Public Schools.

Being well aware of the extreme skill with which false impressions are conveyed in England, I said to myself that it would be interesting to institute a little inquiry into this matter, and did not rest till I had got to the bottom of it. "The public schools" is a very comprehensive expression, including and at once suggesting the *lycées*, so I began my inquiry in them. The result was as I expected; no such question and answer were known in the *lycées*, or had ever been heard of there. My next move was to cause inquiries to be made in the elementary schools. There, also, the question and answer were wholly unknown; but the masters added that since many manuals were used, no single manual being imposed by the Government, as implied by the newspaper statement, there might possibly be some school in which a manual might contain something resembling the question and answer quoted.

The Author's Inquiry into the Matter.

Its Results.

Finally, I wrote to Mr. Arnold himself, hoping to get from him the little scrap of truth on which the falsehood had grown. Mr. Arnold could not give me the name of

Mr. Arnold's Answer.

any school in which anything resembling that question and answer had been heard; he only remembered that "in some school in Paris" he had made a note of the matter. Finally, Mr. Arnold frankly acknowledged that the word "State" (*l'État*) was not used at all. The word really used was *le Pays*, which is not an abstraction but a reality—the land of France with all its inhabitants. The question and answer seemed to Mr. Arnold to exhibit "the superficiality, nay silliness, of the French in treating religion and morals." I see in it nothing but a truthful account of a matter of fact. The children were reminded that they owed their education to the country as a reason for serving the country when the time came.

A Simple Fact.

Scott's Denial of the Authorship of *Waverley*.

Sir Walter Scott has often been severely blamed for defending the anonymous character of the Waverley novels by falsehoods, but he would not have been blamed for defending it by silence, even when silence was fully equivalent to a falsehood. This opens an important question in casuistry. It is likely that almost all French people would say that Sir Walter had a right to defend himself in that way, as the falsehood in self-defence against curiosity is usually considered legitimate in France. Many English people do not think that kind of falsehood legitimate, yet would practise the silence that deceives, or utter a sentence carefully worded so as to be literally true whilst it conveyed an erroneous idea. Everybody defends himself against impertinent curiosity in his own way, and it can seldom be done without some sacrifice of veracity. When Robert Chambers said he wondered how the author of *Vestiges of Creation* would have felt under Herschell's attack, it was not true, he did not wonder, he knew accurately, being himself the author.

Lying in Self-defence.

Defences against Impertinent Curiosity. Robert Chambers.

French Opinion about English Truth.

English Opinion about French Truth.

The Author's Experience.

The French believe the English to be usually truthful in private transactions, but slippery and deceitful in great international affairs; the English have very little confidence in French truth, either in private or public matters. For my part, I have met with extremely deceitful and extremely honourable men in both countries. I have been cheated in both, and treated fairly and justly in both. If, however, I were asked to say which of the two nations is according to my own intimate convictions the more truthful, I should say decidedly the English, except on religious topics, and there the French are more truthful, or, if you will, more unreserved.

## CHAPTER II

### JUSTICE

Intellectual Justice.

WHAT is meant by "justice" in this chapter is the power of suspending judgment until evidence is forthcoming, and then the disposition to decide on the merits of the case unbiassed by prepossessions of any kind. It is one of the rarest, perhaps the very rarest, of intellectual virtues, and hardly ever to be found in times of strife, either between nations or between parties in the same nation.

Little of it in France.

It would be a proof of ignorance of human nature to expect much of this virtue in contemporary France, a country divided, more than any other in Europe, by political and religious animosity. And, in fact, there is very little intellectual justice in France, the only men who cultivate the virtue being a few thoughtful philosophers who have little influence in the nation. I may

Guyau.

mention Guyau as a representative of this small class.[1] He certainly endeavoured to think justly, which is one of several reasons for regretting his premature death. I

[1] Author of *L'Irréligion de l'Avenir, Esquisse d'une Morale sans Obligation ni Sanction, Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine, La Morale d'Epicure et ses Rapports avec les Doctrines Contemporaines*, etc. Guyau died in 1888 at the age of thirty-three.

myself have known two or three Frenchmen in private life who have the same desire to be just.

Justice Commoner in England than in France.

'The English are more favourably situated for the cultivation of this virtue, and, in fact, it is more frequently found amongst them; but the English themselves have entered upon a period of strong political dissension since the Irish question reached an acute stage, and even if that question were settled there are others beyond it which are not less likely to produce great intensity of party hatred. There will not be much justice whilst these dissensions continue. Even so ordinary an occurrence as a simple parliamentary election is now enough to divide the society of an English country town into hostile camps almost as bitter as French parties. What is most to be deplored is that some of the philosophers themselves, who might be expected to keep cool heads, have caught the contagion exactly like ordinary mortals.

Party Dissensions in England.

Even amongst Philosophers.

Independently of political questions, the commonest cause of injustice in England is to be found in the ideas of class. The class of gentlemen has a tendency to give its sympathy, without question, to gentlemen, and to refuse it to those who are not, in its opinion, of that caste. One of the best examples of this tendency was the unanimity of the English gentry in their sympathy with the slaveholders during the American war of secession, purely on the ground that the slaveholders were a gentlemanly class. In comparison with this important point, the injustice of slavery itself sank into complete insignificance. The same rule of sympathy for gentlemen extends to the continent of Europe, although the gentlemen there are often of a very dubious species. Anybody who would put down French popular aspira-

Class Ideas.

Sympathy with the Slaveholders.

Antipathy to French Republicans.

tions was sure of class sympathy in England. A French republican is simply a Frenchman who desires representative government, that is what he is; but class-antipathy set English gentlefolks against him, though they themselves had been the first to profit by representative institutions in their own country. So with regard to

English Sympathy with the Church of Rome.

French conflicts between Church and State, the English upper classes always side instinctively with the Church, although they themselves accepted Church property after the great English spoliation, and many of them are still living upon it, some actually in the very walls of the old abbeys, others within sight of their ruins, whilst others, again, appropriate tithes. If a French mayor prohibits a religious procession it is an act of republican tyranny, yet Roman Catholic processions are not permitted in English streets, and the republicans do not carry their distrust of the clergy so far as to make them ineligible for the Chamber of Deputies as they are for the House of Commons. Neither is a French priest compelled to lay aside his ecclesiastical costume except when he goes to England. However, polite English sympathy with the Church of Rome has one incontestable merit; it is at the same time disinterested and unrequited. The Rev.

Father du Lac. Queen Victoria a "Monstrous Anomaly."

Father du Lac, who took his Jesuit school to Canterbury after the Ferry decrees, and who enjoys British protection, calls Queen Victoria a monstrous anomaly, the anomaly being that royalty and heresy are monstrously combined in the person of Her Majesty.[1]

[1] The reverend father is speaking of Her Majesty's visit to the Grande Chartreuse, which she was able to make by taking advantage of an ancient rule made before the Church could foresee the monstrous anomaly of an heretical king or queen. By that rule, which

Injustice produced by Class Ideas in England itself.

The sharp separation of classes produces much injustice within the limits of England itself. When an Englishman feels himself authorised to despise his equal in wealth, culture, and wisdom, if he happens to be a dissenter, there is a strong temptation to do so, and we find public writers in England who quietly look down upon all dissenters *en bloc* as people of low caste and unrefined manners. After all, these wretched dissenters are Englishmen and Englishwomen, which is surely some title to consideration.

Superiority of many English People to Class Prejudices.

I am far from wishing to imply that the English never rise above the region of class prejudices. Many have done so, and these amongst the most distinguished. Shelley did so completely, Byron partially; in our own day several of the most famous poets and thinkers appear to live, intellectually at least, outside of class. My impression is that the French do not get rid of class prejudices so frequently as the English. If they belong either to the real or the false *noblesse* they think that *noblesse oblige* in a peculiar sense, that it lays them under an obligation to condemn popular aspirations without a hearing.

Class Prejudices amongst the French.

Comparative Mental Independence of the Poor.

It is difficult for the poor in any country to be just, because they so often suffer; still, in France, they are more frequently independent in their judgments than the upper classes, the proof being that they support a greater variety of opinions. You never know how a French peasant will vote till you know him individually, but you

still remains in force, a bishop or a reigning sovereign can visit a house of cloistered monks or nuns. The Archbishop of Canterbury could, however, scarcely get into a nunnery, as the Rev. Father du Lac informs us that the ancient English sees were erased by Pius IX. from the list of the bishoprics of Christendom.

may predict to a certainty that a noble will vote against the republican candidate.

Whether, in quieter and more settled times, French parties will be less virulent, must depend upon the effects of experience. The events of the next decade may have either a calming or an exasperating influence. I do not perceive that parties have become more tolerant during the last ten years. The one good sign is, that with all their hatred they have avoided civil war.

French Parties not becoming more Tolerant.

Next to the rancour of internal politics, the greatest obstacle to justice is that kind of vulgar patriotism which cannot love its own country without hating its neighbours. This sentiment of hatred is strictly proportionate to the neighbour's power. The English have no animosity against Swiss republicanism, though it is still more democratic than French. The French had a romantic sympathy with Italy in her weakness, but they detest her in her strength.

Vulgar Patriotism.

Hatred of Powerful Neighbours.

Most English and French people are capable of justice towards foreigners who belong to insignificant States, such as the Danes, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Swiss, and the Greeks. A few are capable of justice towards citizens of great and powerful States.

Justice to Citizens of Insignificant States.

Mr. Grant Allen has given an excellent example of this rare kind of justice in saying simply what is true about the French colony of Algeria, and in expressing the desire, in the interests of civilisation, that the beneficent French power might ultimately be permitted to extend itself over Morocco. I remember that when the fate of Gordon at Khartoum was still unsettled, some Frenchmen expressed a hearty desire for his preservation and success. They considered that he represented

Mr. Grant Allen just to the French about Algeria.

French Sympathy with Gordon at Khartoum.

civilisation against barbarism, and placed themselves on the side of civilisation.

French Feeling about War.

I have occasionally met with French people who tried to be just even to the Germans, and that, of course, is very hard for them, but the great majority are unable to look upon war as a simple game in which the loser pays the penalty. They think of it as a glorious enterprise when they win, and as a cruel inhuman outrage when they are defeated.

The Defects of one's own Country.

It is a part of strict justice to see the defects of one's own country as plainly as those of another. This is certainly not incompatible with strong affection, as in private life we see very plainly the defects of those whom we love well and faithfully, and for whom we are ready to make the utmost sacrifices. In this way a few Englishmen see clearly the defects of England, but I should say that many more Frenchmen see clearly and justly the defects of France. I have heard severe criticisms of France from English people, but far more telling and formidable criticisms from the French themselves, because they knew the weak points and could criticise in detail. This is especially true with regard to the defects of French administration, apparently so perfect and looking so laboriously after centimes, yet in reality unable to prevent either waste or corruption.

French Criticisms of France.

Inconvenience of Justice in Literature.

The natural refuge of justice ought to be in the press, but unfortunately, as I have observed elsewhere, justice is not a very convenient or acceptable quality in literature, and least of all in journalism. Its constant tendency is to diminish the display of what people foolishly take for literary force, and to make what might otherwise have been called forcible writing seem dull and commonplace.

Now, the French journalist may be wildly inaccurate, he may be wrong in all his statements, and give suppositions in the place of facts, but he cannot afford to be dull, as he addresses readers whose chief peculiarity, as he well knows, is to be inattentive. Wit and exaggeration are the baits by which the French reader is to be caught, but wit is seldom just, and exaggeration never is. There was poor John Brown, the Queen's domestic, I will not say what the French press made of him, but in the exercise of its Gallic sharpness it got a good way beyond the truth. French writers are rather fond of laughing at the Queen, as English writers have laughed at various foreign sovereigns, and sometimes the laugh is harmless yet based on inaccurate information. For example, M. Philippe Daryl says that after a drawing-room "la reine remonte dans son carosse à six chevaux café-au-lait, de race hanovrienne comme elle, et prend le chemin de Windsor." This is a French fiction, intended to make the Queen a little ridiculous; the Frenchman is trotting out the cream-coloured horses (they are eight, not six) for the occasion, and despatches them on the road to Windsor. As a matter of fact the Queen travels to Windsor by rail, and usually drives to the Paddington Station behind four bays, so that the whole pleasantry falls rather flat on an English reader. It is a trifle, but it may serve to illustrate the position of a French writer who must be amusing at all costs.

Baits for the French Reader.

Gallic Sharpness.

M. Philippe Daryl.

His Invention about the Queen.

The great writers are in the same position with a difference. They need not amuse; but they are bound to provide a stirring stimulus. Was Victor Hugo a just writer? Was Carlyle? They knew their business, which was to be forcible; but nobody who understood their

Great Writers not Just.

nature, or their art either, would go to Victor Hugo for a faithful account of the English, or to Carlyle for an exact appreciation of the French. Or shall we turn to Michelet and Ruskin?—both makers of delightful prose, but too much biassed by their own genius to be just. In literature force and brilliance, nay, even mere glassy sparkle or glitter of tinsel, are more effective qualities than the hesitancy that cannot round off a sentence without stopping to inquire whether the praise in it is not too much for the occasion, or the censure undeserved.

Sparkle and Glitter more Valuable than Justice.

Suppose that a just writer were asked to give, in five or six lines, his opinion of the railway system, and its action for good and evil, how would he describe it?

He might say, "The use of railways is to transport merchandise and passengers quickly and cheaply. They favour human intercourse by enabling people to meet in spite of distance, and to exchange letters without delay. They are sometimes, to a limited extent, injurious to beautiful scenery. Railway travelling is sometimes injurious to health; and railway accidents occasionally cause loss of life."

A just Account of Railways.

This is exactly just and true; but it has the fatal defect of being commonplace. It is also quite destitute of sublimity. Now listen to Mr. Ruskin on the same subject.

"They are to me the loathsomest form of devilry now extant, animated and deliberate earthquakes, destructive of all wise social habits and possible natural beauty, carriages of damned souls on the ridges of their own graves."

A Powerful Description of Railways.

These lines have several most valuable literary qualities. They give a shock of surprise, they captivate

Analysis of Mr. Ruskin's Description.

attention, they entirely avoid the quagmire of the commonplace. They introduce very sublime elements, the Miltonic elements of devilry, earthquakes, and lost spirits. There is, too, a mysterious grandeur about the damned souls who take railway tickets and travel over their own corpses buried in the embankments. But is this account of railways accurate and true? Is it just to the memory of George Stephenson?

## CHAPTER III

### PURITY

Difficulty of the Subject.

Of all subjects this is the most difficult to treat satisfactorily; because there is, and must be, an inevitable reticence that is sure to weaken the argument at the most important points. Besides this, the subject, more than any other, is steeped in conventionalisms, some of which it is considered right or pardonable to act upon, but not pardonable to express. There are tacit tolerations which it is an offence to avow, as if the avowal incurred a new and personal responsibility. And even the most frank and courageous of writers might well shrink from a subject that cannot be fully discussed, at least in an English book.

Conventionalisms.

Tacit Tolerations.

There is, however, one point of great importance which has never, so far as I know, been frankly touched upon before, and which may help us to understand the varieties and inconsistencies of public opinion.

We all know that the relation between the sexes is of a dual nature; that it is both physical and mental. A man may be attracted to a woman by a physical impulse, or by a desire for her companionship, or by both at the same time. This we all know and admit; but the fiction of our conventionalism, and a very curious and wonderful

Partiality of our Conventionalism.

Two Weights and Two Measures.

fiction it is, excludes one or the other of the two reasons for cohabitation after ascertaining whether it is, or is not, in accordance with received usages. If the cohabitation is not of a customary kind, it is at once assumed that physical pleasure is the only object of it; and that pleasure is spoken of in terms of disgust, as vile, sensual, and degrading. If, however, the cohabitation is of a customary kind, not only is the physical pleasure permitted without reproach, but it is conventionally ignored as non-existent, and the motive for cohabitation is held to be the pure desire for companionship. One of the best examples of this contrast is the different way of regarding the marriage of ecclesiastics in a Catholic and in a Protestant community. An Anglican clergyman gets married, and the incident, being in accordance with custom, conveys no idea to the Protestant mind beyond this—that the clergyman may have felt lonely by himself, and wanted the help, the companionship, the gentle affection of a wife. The physical relation is set aside, it is simply not thought about, and even this slight and passing allusion to it may be condemned as unbecoming. Now let us turn to the state of opinion in Roman Catholic countries. There, when people hear of the marriage of an ecclesiastic, they think of nothing but the physical relation, and they think of it as disgusting, filthy, and obscene, though, in fact, it is simply natural and no more. In this case the desire for companionship is ignored, and physical appetite alone is assumed to be the motive for the union. A case has occurred of a Protestant ecclesiastic, who married after his elevation to a bishopric. I despair of conveying to the English reader any idea of the aspect that such a union must

Opposite Views of the Marriage of Ecclesiastics.

Marriage of a Bishop.

have for Catholics who have never lived amongst Protestants. For them it is not only monstrous as an outrage against custom, but it even seems monstrous in the sense of being unnatural. Something of this Catholic horror remained even in the strong mind of Queen Elizabeth. She was near enough to Catholic times, and had still enough of Catholic sentiment, to be unable to look upon a bishop's wife without loathing.

Catholic Horror.

When custom partly but not entirely tolerates cohabitation, we find the two ideas predominating in different people. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is, for those who are favourable to it, the desire for affectionate companionship or for motherly tenderness towards children already existing; for those who are unfavourable it is a lust of the flesh. In like manner there are two estimates of the conduct of a divorced woman who marries again during her first husband's lifetime.

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.

We may now approach the subject of illegitimate unions. In societies where they are tolerated the idea of companionship prevails; in societies where they are not tolerated the physical aspect of the union immediately suggests itself. In the large towns both of England and France it is not rare amongst the lower classes for men and women to live together without formal marriage. With reference to these cases the complaint of moralists is that the people have no proper sense of the necessity of marriage, they have not the proper consciousness that they are doing wrong. The reason is that these unions are permitted by the customs of the lower classes, and are scarcely blamed when the man remains faithful to the woman and treats her well; therefore the physical relation is as much ignored as it

Illegitimate Unions.

Cohabitation in large Towns.

Customs of the Lower Classes.

is in formal marriage, and companionship alone is thought of.

Illicit Unions in the Artistic and Intellectual Classes.

The same great power of custom, in casting a veil over the grosser side of the sexual relation, is seen in higher classes whenever illicit unions are tolerated by public opinion, and they often are so in the artistic and intellectual classes of great capitals when it is evident that the union is one of genuine companionship, and when it is of a lasting character, and both parties remain at least apparently faithful to it. Here is an expression of this toleration by M. Alfred Asseline, true for Paris, but not true for the provinces. I give it in the original, because the exact shades of expression could not easily be reproduced in a translation.

Quotation from M. Alfred Asseline.

"Dans l'état où sont nos mœurs, il est admis que les hommes supérieurs ont le privilège d'imposer à ce qu'on appelle le monde, à la société dont ils sont le charme et l'honneur, une amie,—l'amie,—la femme qu'il leur a plu de choisir comme le témoin voilé de leurs travaux, celle qui, légitime ou non, se tient dans l'ombre, confidente discrète du génie, au moment ou ses rayons s'allument.

"Ce n'est pas la vulgaire Égérie, c'est la Muse, c'est l'âme mème du poète qu'il nous est permis, dans les épanchements de l'amitié, de voir, d'admirer, de respecter."

Careful Exclusion of Impure Ideas.

The reader will observe in these carefully chosen words how deliberately all suggestion of impurity is excluded, and how the writer dwells upon intellectual companionship alone. He may understand this still better by reference to a special case.

About the year 1833 there was an actress at the theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin, named Juliette Drouet,

who performed in two of Victor Hugo's plays, *Lucrèce Borgia* and *Marie Tudor*. The poet was pleased with her performance, and thought well of her intelligence. In this way he was attracted to herself, and she became his mistress, and lived either with him, or very near him, till she died many years afterwards. She had a residence close to his own at Guernsey, which Victor Hugo arranged and decorated. When he returned to Paris she returned with him and continued to be his very near neighbour. It was the fashion in Paris to think only of the intellectual side of this *liaison*, and to speak of Madame Drouet with the utmost respect as the poet's wise and discreet friend, a kind of living Muse for him. The lawful wife herself, who knew all, spoke without bitterness of her rival. "These gentlemen," she said one day to her cousin, meaning her husband and son, "have arranged a little *fête* at Madame Drouet's, and they are expecting you. I insist on your going, it will please my husband." When Madame Drouet died, the notices in the newspapers were most respectful to her, and sympathetic with the old poet who had lost "the faithful friend and wise and gentle adviser of so many years."

Story of Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet.

Parisian Opinion on that *liaison*.

Respectful Tone of the Press.

It will be seen from these extracts that illicit unions may under certain favourable circumstances (especially that of intellectual or artistic companionship) come to be conventionally protected, as marriage itself is, by the use of the purest possible language. There have been cases in London more or less resembling that of Victor Hugo, which it would be considered an offence against good taste to speak about in the plain terms of old-fashioned morality.

Protection by the Use of Pure Language.

M. André Theuriet, in his excellent novel *Amour*

André Theuriet on Parisian and Provincial Opinion.

*d'Automne*, says that adulterous *liaisons* are conventionally tolerated in Paris, but judged very severely by the stricter provincial opinion. Those who feel disposed to tolerate them, speak of them in words so carefully selected that they may be used before virgins and children. There was "an affectionate friendship" between the gentleman and lady, or "an old attachment." Fidelity in these cases gives them an air of positive virtue:—

"Le temps, vieillard divin, honore et blanchit tout!"

Toleration in Italy and Germany.

Lewes and Liszt.

Liszt and the Princess of Wittgenstein.

This kind of toleration is not by any means confined to London and Paris; it has long existed in Italy and Germany. Lewes might have counted upon it in Liszt, yet at Weimar he asked if he might present Miss Evans to the musician, not feeling sure "as their position was irregular." Liszt himself was living at Weimar with the Princess of Wittgenstein, who had left her husband for his sake; and the duke had been so accommodating as to lend them the Altenburg residence, where they dispensed a graceful hospitality to many friends. The long series of Liszt's successes with distinguished ladies did not exclude him from the world of London and Paris.

Great Capitals— their Opinion of each Other.

Divorce Court Evidence.

Statistics of Prostitution.

Clandestine Prostitution.

Every great capital believes that some other great capital is the most vicious in the world. London accords that distinction to Paris, Paris to Vienna, but these accusations are vague, and it is impossible to know the truth. The evidence in the Divorce Courts reveals a little of it now and then, and is good evidence so far as it extends, but it is never published in France. Statistics of prostitution are also admissible as evidence, but it is difficult to found any comparative argument upon them; because, in great cities, there is so much clandestine prostitution, so much eking out of miserable incomes by

that means. The decent, modestly-dressed girl, the sad-looking young widow whom nobody suspects, may have yielded to the pressure of want.

I am unable to follow the English habit of taking French novels as evidence of the general corruption of French life, and will give good reasons for this rejection. Before doing so let me observe that I am equally unwilling to believe evil, on insufficient evidence, of the English. For example, I have never attached the slightest weight to what were called the "revelations of the *Pall Mall Gazette*," which all the viler French newspapers affected to believe merely because they would have been, if true, such precious facts for the enemy.

The Author's Unwillingness to believe Evil on Insufficient Evidence.

The English argument usually assumes one of two forms :—

The English Arguments from French Fiction.

1. Novelists draw from life ; consequently, as adultery is almost universal in French novels it must be equally common in French life.

2. French people purchase novels about adultery in great numbers ; consequently, the readers of these books must commit adultery themselves.

With regard to the first of these propositions, I should say that crimes of all kinds occur more frequently in all imaginative literature than they do in the dull routine of everyday existence. Murder, for example, is much more frequent in *Shakespeare* than it is in ordinary English life. Even stories that are considered innocent enough to be read by the young, such as *The Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and, in recent times, Mr. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, are full of villainy and homicide, introduced for no purpose in the world but to excite the interest of the reader. What would English critics say to a Frenchman

Frequency of Crime in Imaginative Literature.

Shakespeare.

Stories read by the Young.

The Suicide Club.

who should affirm that there are suicide clubs in England like the mutual murder society described with such circumstantial detail in the *New Arabian Nights*? If we think of a few famous English novels we shall find that they often describe situations which are certainly not common in the ordinary lives of respectable people like ourselves. We are not generally either bigamists, or seducers, or wife-slayers, yet *Jane Eyre* turned upon an intended bigamy, *Adam Bede* turned upon a case of seduction and infanticide, and *Paul Ferroll* fascinated us by the wonderfully self-possessed behaviour of a gentleman who had quietly murdered his wife, as she lay in bed, early one summer morning. In *Daniel Deronda* the most polished gentleman in the book has a family of illegitimate children, and the most brilliant young lady becomes, in intention, a murderess, whilst the sweetest girl is rescued from attempted suicide. These things *may* happen, which is enough for the purposes of the novelist. In France the great difficulty of that artist is the uninteresting nature of the usual preliminaries of marriage, so that he is thrown back upon adulterous love as the only kind that is adventurous and romantic.

Jane Eyre.

Adam Bede.

Paul Ferroll.

Daniel Deronda.

That Fiction only represents Collected Cases.

The argument that the world of reality must be like the world of fiction fails in another way. Real people are almost infinitely more numerous than the creations of novelists, therefore, if every immoral adventure in novels were drawn from life, it would only prove that the novelist had collected cases, as a medical student might collect cases of disease in a fairly healthy population. As a matter of fact, however, the novelist does not usually take his *incidents* from reality; he will often go to nature for his characters, and to invention for his situations.

Situations often Invented.

The material in real life that suggests the stories need not be very abundant. The cases of immorality found in the English newspapers alone would be more than enough to keep the principal French novelists at work all the year round.

Materials not necessarily Abundant.

The novelists themselves are a small class working under immense temptations. They live in Paris, where life is terribly expensive, rents enormous, habits luxurious. It is part of their business to see society, and that entails an expenditure above the ordinary gains of quiet unsensational literature. The temptation to gain more money is, in such a situation, almost irresistible. Money is to be earned by exciting the reader. Writers for the populace do this chiefly by murders; but murders are not so attractive to the richer and more refined classes as adventures of pleasure and sensuality. The novelist works for his public, and enjoys both a world-wide notoriety and a handsome income. The most successful novelists describe the pleasures of luxury and vice, and the excitement to be derived from their pursuit. They are simply acute tradesmen, like their publishers, who supply what is in demand.

Novelists a small Class.

Tempted by Money.

The Reader must be Excited.

Novelists acute Tradesmen.

Now with regard to the second proposition, that the readers of immoral stories must themselves be immoral, observation of actual cases entirely fails to confirm it. People read these stories because they feel dull, and seek the interest of exciting situations. Here is a case well known to me. A lady lives in a very out-of-the-way country house and sees very little society; so reading is her only resource. Fiction is naturally an important part of her reading, and as she is not a linguist she is confined to the works of French authors and a few translations.

Why People read Novels.

Dull Lives.

In this way she has read a good deal about adultery, but her own life is unimpeachable. In like manner, for the sake of a little excitement, an English old maid always read about the murders of the day, and was accurately informed about the horrible details; yet she never murdered anybody, nor even betrayed any homicidal impulse.

An English old Maid.

It is quietly assumed that French novels are written only for the depraved tastes of French readers. French novels are, in fact, the most cosmopolitan of all literatures since the Latin classics. They have a great circulation in Russia, Germany, Italy, England, and other countries. It appears that they answer accurately to the present state of civilisation. In England they are bought by thousands both in the originals and in translations. In a London drawing-room some years ago I found that everybody could talk about Daudet except myself, and this made me read some of his books that I might appear less ignorant. A writer in the *Saturday Review*[1] speaks of those music halls and restaurants which are chiefly frequented by the *demi-monde*, and then goes on to say: "There is the same fascination in going to these places that there is in reading French novels of more than doubtful morality. Let it be known that there is a book that is hardly decent, and the rush for it is immense amongst our young married ladies, and even among some of the elder spinsters. Indeed, not to have read any book that is more indecent than usual is to be out of the fashion." This is probably exaggerated, as many books are perfectly decorous in expression whilst depicting an immoral kind of life, and a life may preserve the strictest

Cosmopolitan Audience of French Novelists.

Daudet well known in London.

Fashionable Rage for French Novels in England.

[1] In the number for 23d July 1887.

purity of language though given over to unbridled desires. But, however bad may be the books they read, no one supposes that Englishwomen misconduct themselves in a practical manner because they have read them. Would it be more than fair to extend the same charity to Frenchwomen? It might, at least, be borne in mind that all Frenchwomen are not novel-readers. Many do not read novels at all, others are extremely careful in their choice. All pious women naturally avoid impure literature, and they are a numerous class. Girls are usually limited, in fiction, to translations from English stories and to a few harmless French ones. The habit of novel-reading seems even to vary with localities. The Prefect of the Seine procured some interesting statistics in 1886 about the lending libraries on the outskirts of Paris (for a purpose connected with the budget of the department), and from these it appears that there are the most surprising degrees of variety in the habit of novel-reading in different localities. At Asnières, out of a hundred volumes asked for in the libraries, eighty-six are novels, whilst at St. Denis we find them suddenly falling to twelve in the hundred. At Courbevoie the demand for this class of literature is represented by eighty-two per cent, at St. Ouen by twelve and three-quarters. Other places vary between these extremes.

Not all French-women Novel-Readers.

Pious Women. Girls.

Statistics of Novel-Reading near Paris.

The *Saturday Review*, never very charitable in its judgments about France, and not often very well informed, has spoken as follows about public education in that country: "France has taken a great step forward in these days. It has gone all the way to an expenditure of ninety millions of francs a year, and although Mr. Matthew Arnold does not say so, has materially added to

The *Saturday Review* on Public Education in France.

its now permanent deficit by lavish outlay on schools, in which it trains thousands of children to read." (Well, surely there can be no harm in teaching children to read, but international malevolence is ingenious enough to find evil even here. I resume my suspended quotation:)

How the French use their Knowledge.

"Thousands of children to read who *will never use their knowledge again, or will use it only to read obscenity, to the great and manifest advantage of their minds and morals.*"

This is the kind of information about France which appears to satisfy the readers of the *Saturday Review*. It is on a level with the surprising statements about the English that we find in the most ignorant French newspapers.

What the French Lower Classes read.

The principal reading of the lower classes is the newspapers published at one sou. Some of these are very ably conducted (for example, the *Lyon Républicain*), some others at the same price are much inferior, but the better class of these journals have a great circulation and

Trashy Novels.

are doing more good than harm. The inferior ones publish the sort of trash, in the way of novels, that suits an uncultivated taste. The principal difference between these novels and those read by educated people does not seem to be so much in morality as in the more abundant

Horrible Situations.

variety of horrible situations supplied by the writer for the populace. In France, as in England and elsewhere, the desire for excitement which characterises the beginner in reading seems to turn naturally to harrowing scenes. But the poor Frenchman is not confined to his newspaper. He has now plenty of opportunities for purchasing cheap scientific and literary works, and also for borrowing

*Cent Bons Livres.*

them. The collection of *Cent Bons Livres*, published by

Félix Vernay, contains books of both classes issued in a legible type at two sous, and not one of them is immoral. The *Bibliothèque Populaire*, also at two sous, consists of selections from French and foreign literature. The texts are very accurately printed, the translations are good, and the publishers are strict in the exclusion of immoral works; yet the sale of the collection is extensive, and it is found in the dwellings of the humbler classes. The same may be said of the *Bibliothèque Utile*, published by Alcan. But perhaps the best evidence on this subject is in the popular lending libraries instituted by the Government. The books for these libraries are specially examined by a commission appointed for the purpose, which excludes indecent publications. There are also the *bibliothèques scolaires* or lending libraries in the schools, and regimental libraries in the barracks, besides the older town libraries, often extensive and valuable, which are open to all. With regard to the providing of literature in a form suitable for readers of limited education, I may add that this class of literature, simple in expression, yet neither deficient in intelligence nor behind the age in knowledge, scarcely existed in France twenty-five years ago, but is now produced in constantly increasing quantity. Even in former times, however, when facilities were so few, men of the humbler classes frequently rose in the world, and they could not have done that without self-education, nor without better reading than the "obscenity" of the *Saturday Review*. I have known several such Frenchmen, and have always found their minds preoccupied with creditable pursuits, generally of a scientific character.[1]

*La Bibliothèque Populaire.*

*La Bibliothèque Utile.*

Lending Libraries.

In Schools and Barracks.

Recent Progress.

Self-made Frenchmen.

[1] A Natural History Society was founded in Autun (a small old

The wild statements of anonymous and irresponsible writers are hardly deserving of serious attention, but I have always deeply regretted that several English writers of note, and especially Matthew Arnold, should have allowed their patriotism to express itself in similar accusations. In 1885 Arnold wrote an article on America for the *Nineteenth Century*, and went out of his way to say that "the French" are "at present vowed to the worship of the great goddess Lubricity."

Matthew Arnold.

The Great Goddess Lubricity.

This is one of those statements about France which obtain ready currency in England, because they gratify the patriotic desire to feel better than the neighbours across the water. The ordinary Englishman, learning on the authority of a distinguished writer that the French are vowed to the worship of such a goddess, can think to himself, "Well, we have our faults, perhaps we worship money too much, but at any rate we do not bow down to such a filthy idol as that," and he has a sense of inward satisfaction. I, for my part, have never understood how anybody can derive satisfaction from anything but well-tested truth, and when I hear a comprehensive statement of this kind, my way is always to think of living examples known to me. I invite the reader to follow me, from a settled conviction that my method is a good one.

English Satisfaction in French Immorality.

Examples.

Have I ever known any Frenchman of whom it could be fairly said that he was vowed to the worship of the great goddess Lubricity? Yes, I have known one absolutely given over to that vice. His life had been

Two Extreme Cases of Vicious Lives.

town in Burgundy) two or three years ago. It now includes more than four hundred members. Their principal pleasure is to take long walks in the neighbourhood for geological and botanical purposes. They have meetings, lectures, and a museum. Anything more moral or more healthy it is impossible to imagine.

that of a Sultan entirely absorbed in the pleasures of the harem; he was rich, idle, "noble," with no pursuits but that, and nature paid him with a terrible penalty. In his permature old age he would cynically boast of the exploits of that which, for his bestial nature, had been a sort of manhood. I have known a similar case in England, a man of some rank, whose whole mind centred itself on that one pleasure, till at length it led him to conduct of such a character as to involve utter social ruin. Applied to these men Mr. Arnold's expression would be absolutely just.

Rarity of the Sexual Monomania.

But this state of mind, which amounts to a species of insanity or monomania, is rare. Men have other interests and pursuits. Those of the middle class have business, those of the upper have field sports, horses, yachting, travelling. A few have special studies, in France generally archæology, natural history, music, or painting. Are they all strictly virtuous in France? No. Are they all strictly virtuous in England? No. It is often suspected that when a young Englishman goes to town he yields to certain temptations, and when a provincial Frenchman *va à Paris pour s'amuser*, his friends imagine very frequently that he is tired of the strict surveillance of public opinion in the country. That rural public opinion is almost as strict in France as in England. A rich lady near a provincial town that I know committed adultery many years ago, and has been living in forced retirement ever since. Another rich lady in another provincial town, very beautiful, very charming, had a romantic adventure, and she, too, has been left alone in her great house. A wealthy young man brought a mistress down from Paris; she had not been out three

Strictness of French Provincial Opinion.

Social Penalties.

Kept Mistresses in Provincial England and France.

times in her little pony carriage before it became a public scandal. In a similar neighbourhood in England it was perfectly well known that some of the rich young men had mistresses at a distance, but they could not bring them near to their own homes for fear of the same scandal. I remember asking a French gentleman if he received a clever young man who had rendered services to his political party. "No," he said, "he is immoral, and I have a fixed rule never to receive immoral men."

Zola's Picture of Rural Life.

Whilst writing this chapter I have got a letter from a well-known Englishman who asks me if Zola's picture of rustic morals in *La Terre* is true. I have never read any of Zola's novels, preferring the study of life in nature, but I am told that the book is disgusting. In that case it cannot be true as a general representation of nature.

Lancashire and Yorkshire. Saône-et-Loire.

I have lived in the country in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and in the French department of Saône-et-Loire, and so far as my observation has extended I should say that rustic morals are very nearly on the same level in both places. Cases of adultery are rare in both though not unknown. Illegitimate births occur occasionally in both.

A Comparison.

Our servants have conducted themselves as well in France as in England, and as well in England as in France. There have been a very few mishaps. It is not uncommon in the north of England for a child to be born too soon after marriage, and the same thing occurs in Saône-et-Loire. The daughters of the better class of farmers are, so far as I know, a most respectable class both in England and France. Some of the best quiet manners I have met with have been in that class—modest and simple manners, without any pretension, but with dignity and self-respect.

For the country gentlefolks here are parallel examples. I had a neighbour in England who lived quietly in the country, had certain rather refined tastes, and was respected by every one. I have a neighbour in France who lives quietly in the country, has precisely the same tastes as the Englishman, and lives with his family exactly in the same way, except, perhaps, that he has *déjeuner* at eleven when the Englishman had luncheon at one. The Frenchman and his wife are also respected by everybody, and I have not the faintest reason for supposing that they do not deserve it. Yet I am asked to believe that they are intensely vicious, and if I inquire for proofs I am referred to novels written by some Parisian who has never seen my neighbours.

Parallel Examples amongst Country Gentlefolks.

A large class, both in France and England, whose general good conduct is doubted by nobody who knows the countries, is that of unmarried girls in the middle and upper classes. Here a fall is so rare as to be practically unknown. The English girl is less retiring than the French *jeune fille*, and she knows more, but she is equally safe. It is something that the two civilisations should have produced at least one class that is so very nearly immaculate.

Unmarried Girls.

There are a few flagrant cases of immorality every year amongst the French clergy; but although surrounded by enemies eager to publish every fault, and powerless now to impose or procure silence, they keep, on the whole, a reputation equal to that of the Catholic clergy anywhere. Even their enemies believe them to be far more moral than the Italian priesthood, for example. The clergy in England have an equally good reputation, in spite of occasional scandals, and there is no reason for

The French Clergy.

The Anglican Clergy.

supposing it to be undeserved; but they have the safeguard of marriage.

Soldiers and Sailors.

With the armies the case is different. Soldiers and sailors enjoy a reputation for bravery, but not for sexual morality in either country. There is terribly strong medical evidence on this subject which I cannot go into, *real* evidence, better than the inventions of novelists.

English Medical Opinion.

English medical opinions are of the gravest possible import, as they point to a danger to the military strength of the country in comparison with which the Channel tunnel would be a trifle; but it may be argued, as regards the health of the nation generally, that the English army is but a part of the nation, whereas the French army represents the nation itself. Another difficulty in the comparison arises from the fact that, although the French may be quite as immoral as the English, their sanitary legislation is more rigorously prudent, so that the consequent physical evils are much diminished. This subject is almost forbidden me in a book intended for general reading; but if any one cares to form a just opinion, I recommend him to study authentic statistics of the health of armies.

French Sanitary Legislation.

Student Life in the Two Nations.

English student life is, on the whole, quieter and more moral than French. France has plenty of public schools in the country, or at least in country towns, where the boys are kept under the most rigorous restraint; but she has no country universities, she has no Oxford and Cambridge, where young men live under a sort of gentle restraint, and in places of comparatively small size, where the army of vice is not in full force, but represented only by a detachment. French student life is chiefly concentrated in Paris, and resembles that of

medical students and art students in London, which may, of course, be perfectly moral if they choose to make it so, but which, in the midst of innumerable facilities and temptations, depends entirely upon themselves. Student life in Edinburgh has the same liberty as in Paris, but is probably more moral on account of the greater seriousness of the Scottish character, and the intellectual ambition of Scottish youth. Both in England and France the errors of young men are very lightly passed over and excused; but in France they are more *expected*, more taken as a matter of course, and there is more of a settled tradition of immorality amongst French students than amongst English. Still, there is nothing in the French system to prevent a young man from living like a good Scotchman if he likes. Foreigners know nothing about the struggling student who is at Paris for his work and has neither time nor money for much else. The reader is probably aware that amongst Scottish students there are striking examples of courage and self-denial, but he is not likely to know that Paris abounds with instances that, for a richer country, are precisely of the same kind. I will mention two cases, those of young men whom I know personally and regard with all the respect which they deserve. One of them, in consequence of a family misfortune, was dependent upon his mother's labour, and by hard work and close economy she was able to support him when at school. She could not undertake the expense of his student life at Paris, but she had a relation there who offered two great helps, a bed and one meal every day. This was absolutely all the young man had to count upon; the rest had to be won by his own labour. He contrived—I have not space

Student Life in Capital Cities.

Struggling Students in Paris.

Two Cases of French Students.

to tell how—to earn all the money necessary for everything else, and became an army surgeon, after which, by further hard work, he gained the medical *agrégation* (a sort of fellowship won by a severe medical examination). I know from his companions that during his student days he carefully kept aloof from idle and dissipated society. The other case is that of a young man whose mother, a widow, could do nothing for him. His earlier education was paid for by the bounty of a rich lady, but as soon as he could earn money by teaching he did so, and went on vigorously with his studies at the same time. He even managed to keep his mother by his labour without hindering his own advancement. He won a fellowship, and is now occupying the chair of a professor of history—I do not mean in a school, but as a *professeur de faculté*. He is one of the most cultivated men I ever knew, and probably one of the happiest. Such a career as his is not the usual consequence of a frivolous and dissipated youth. I was talking, an hour before writing this page, with a Frenchman whose own life has been a remarkable example of labour and self-denial, and he told me that there are at this moment hundreds of students in Paris who are supporting themselves, at least in part, by means of lessons and humble literary work, in order that they may enter the professions.

Poor Students in Paris.

Efforts of poor Students for their own Support.

One or two indications have reached me which seem to imply that in England there exists a belief that French school life is immoral. This may be founded on the mutual amenities of the clerical and lay parties in France, which profess a complete disbelief in each other's morality, and would equally accuse each other of murder, if that were as difficult to test. Nobody knows much about the

French School Life.

morality of boys, but I may observe that the government of French schools, both lay and clerical, is too strict for any immorality that can be detected to make way there. The very few instances of it in school life that have come to my knowledge have been followed by instant expulsion. I have heard something about school immorality in England, especially in one great public school, coupled with an expression of the desire that the rigorous French system could be established there, not in all things, but for this one safeguard.

Morality of Boys in French Schools.

Morality in English Schools.

With regard to the class of domestic servants, I am told that in Paris the morality of servants is generally much lower than in the country; but never having kept house in Paris I know nothing about it, except by hearsay. Statistics show a remarkably large proportion of illegitimate births for the capital; this, however, is rather favourable in a certain sense, I mean in the sense of natural morality, as the worst women are sterile. An ecclesiastic of high rank, who has had exceptional opportunities for studying the moral aspects of Paris, told me that he attributed the greater laxity there in the class of domestics to the system of lodging, by which the servants are often separated from the family life of the household, and sent to sleep up in the attics, where they are in a world of their own.

Domestic Servants in Paris.

The Parisian System of Lodging.

Here I leave this subject, the most difficult to treat in the volume, and the most unsatisfactory in many ways. It is unsatisfactory because the facts are usually concealed, and that leaves room for uncharitable minds to assume a concealed immorality in others, as, for example, when it is assumed, without any proof, that respectable French

Unsatisfactory Nature of the Subject.

Two Codes of Morality.

people are immoral. It is unsatisfactory, because there are two codes of morality, a severe one that is expressed, and a laxer one that is understood and acted upon. It is unsatisfactory, because language itself is so employed as to make the same actions pure or impure as they are or are not admitted by the customs of society. But the subject is most unsatisfactory because there is a permanent conflict between the animal nature of man and the situation in which a safe and peaceful civilisation places him. He is gifted with reproductive powers well adapted to fill up the ranks of primitive societies as they were continually decimated by disease, by famine, and by violent death; but in a state of civilisation in which diseased people live on, in which famine is all but unknown, and wars continually postponed, the reproductive force is so much in excess of the need for it that it bursts forth in tremendous moral evils. Nor is the difficulty lessening; it is, on the contrary, increasing year by year. The prudent classes avoid marriage more and more, thus exposing young men to the snare of the kept mistress or the peril of promiscuous concubinage. The imprudent classes marry with perfect recklessness, and even their marriages themselves are indirectly favourable to immorality, because they supply recruits for the army of vice by bringing up children in conditions that make decency impossible. The crowding of people together in industrial centres and the craving for town excitements all tend towards the one greatest and most natural of all excitements; the vast increase of military life tends to it also in other ways. But of all the influences directly or indirectly tending towards immorality *Gentility* is the most subtle and deadly in its operation. Genteel young men dare not

Permanent Conflict between Man's Animal Nature and his civilised Condition.

Increase of the Difficulty.

The Prudent Classes avoid Marriage.

The Imprudent.

Effects of Crowding.

Gentility.

marry on small incomes because poverty will take the polish off their style of living; genteel young ladies cannot marry unless they are assured of incomes large enough to dress fashionably and have all the housework done by servants. In France, and not in France only, but much more in France than in England, the number of offspring is limited that the family may maintain a genteel position in life and not fall down into the working classes. In the poorer classes themselves the desire for a genteel appearance is the great temptation of women. I remember a dangerously beautiful young Frenchwoman married to a professional man who earned a wretchedly small income, yet she dressed most expensively, and had but one means of paying her milliner's bills. She was the representative of a class. When we look these truths and their consequences in the face, we come to understand the close connection that there is between natural morality and simplicity of life. It is of no use to preach morality to people so long as we show by our language, by our manners, by every kind of expression or implication, that we despise them for living plainly and respect them for living luxuriously. By the help of the tailor, the cook, and the carriage-builder I can be a "gentleman" in England, and a "*monsieur comme il faut*" in France; by the help of Epictetus I can live simply and be a common man whom the luxurious man will patronise.

Limitation of Offspring.

The great Temptation of Women.

Connection between Morality and plain Living.

Luxurious Livers respected.

This chapter has been occupied more with actions than with ideals, but it would not be complete without some reference to ideals. The English idea takes the form of moral pride, of belief in one's own moral superiority. This is offensive to other nations because it expresses itself unpleasantly, not in words only but in

The English Idea.

Utility of English Moral Pride.

manners. But however offensive it may be to Frenchmen (and it irritates them to the supreme degree), it is most valuable to the English themselves as a strength and a support. The intense soldierly pride of the military caste in Prussia was offensive, but it enabled the army to endure the discipline that led to all success. No amount of divorce-court evidence, no amount of medical evidence, no amount of ocular evidence, even in the public streets, will ever convince the English that they are not moral, and therefore their moral standard is maintained, at least ideally. It is well for them to have this opinion about themselves so long as they make the feeblest effort to justify it. To have national pride on the side of morality is to give morality a mighty ally.

Want of moral Pride in France.

The French, unfortunately for them, have never associated national pride with morality. They have associated it with generosity, with courage, and with the externals of civilisation, but never with sexual purity. The French never think that they are purer than other people, they imagine that the weakness of humanity is the same everywhere, and as Paris is the pleasure city of Europe they have ample opportunities for observing how foreigners conduct themselves there, which only confirms them in their opinion. Still, it cannot be truly said that the entire French nation is without an ideal, even in this matter. The goddess of French maidenhood is not the goddess of Lubricity, but her precise opposite, the Holy Virgin. It has been written, with slight exaggeration, that every French girl is called Marie; it is not an exaggeration to say that every French girl brought up in the Catholic religion is taught to look to the Holy Virgin as her ideal. It may be answered that the Virgin Mary is

Foreigners in Paris.

The Goddess of French Maidenhood.

not unknown in England either; certainly the Virgin Mary is known there, but *La Sainte Vierge* is not. The Virgin Mary is partly ideal, but there is much everyday reality about her, and Protestantism insists upon that reality which French Catholicism conceals. The Virgin Mary is also an ordinary mother; she had a family by Joseph, the carpenter. In *La Sainte Vierge* there is nothing to diminish the purity of the ideal; her marriage with Joseph was merely nominal, and Joseph himself was a great saint above the common lot of humanity. *La Sainte Vierge* had but one child, and that one by the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary is in heaven, *La Sainte Vierge* reigns for ever as the crowned Queen of Heaven and the royal patroness and special protectress of France. Her statue is on a hundred hills, it looks down benignantly from a thousand towers, she herself, the mystical Tower of Ivory, has preserved many a French city from invasion. Every French girl, at her *première communion*, is robed in white from head to foot in emulation of her purity; during *her* month, *le mois de Marie*, her hundred thousand altars are covered with flowers in memory of her sweetness, and all the terms of love and praise are exhausted in her litanies.

The Virgin Mary and *La Sainte Vierge*.

*La Sainte Vierge* an Ideal.

The Queen of Heaven.

There is no ideal for the male sex comparable to this. We have read of Sir Galahad, who could say—

Want of a Masculine moral Ideal.

> "I never felt the kiss of love,
> Nor maiden's hand in mine."

But who is Sir Galahad? In England only a poetical creation, in France unheard of and unknown. Were he known he would encounter a danger that even the bravest knight might dread. It might be decided, in France,

Sir Galahad.

that he was ridiculous. I have been represented as holding the opinion that France and England are exactly on the same level in morals; but that is not my view. Justice consists in giving everybody his due, it does not consist in believing that nations are exactly alike. I have no doubt that England is the more moral country of the two, even in practice, and much more in principle and feeling. The great difference (and it is most profound) is that the English are still capable of stern and austere feeling about these matters, which they have derived from Puritan ancestors; whereas the French, even when practically chaste in their own lives, regard adultery, in the male sex at least, with a sort of amusement not always unmingled with admiration for the address and audacity of the sinner. A witty word may save him. I knew a marble-cutter who was accused of some illicit passion, and who saved himself by the reply, "*Pour être marbrier, on n'est pas de marbre.*" A certain incident in the life of a former prime minister of Egypt may be taken as a test of the feeling of the two countries. In England he is looked upon with serious respect as an example of chastity in youth, and wisdom in maturity; but in France all the ability of his administration cannot efface the recollection of his "*niaiserie*" in the well-known interview with "Madame Putiphar," and shame-faced youths are called after him to this day.

England the more moral Country.

Especially in Principle and Feeling.

The Story of Joseph.

## CHAPTER IV

### TEMPERANCE

THE French are supposed to be a much more temperate nation than the English, and, in fact, there used to be few drunkards in France. That country has, however, a peculiar characteristic as to drinking. It is a country where moderate drinking is itself immoderate. The reader understands what this contradictory statement means.

Moderate Drinking in France.

Men are called moderate drinkers so long as they do not show any outward sign of being "the worse for liquor." But there is an education of the body by which it may be made to absorb great quantities of alcoholic stimulants without exhibiting anything in the nature of drunkenness. In France it is considered shameful and disgusting to be drunk; but no blame is attached to the utmost indulgence in drinking so long as it keeps on the safe side. This leads to that artful kind of drinking which is well known to all French physicians, and which produces, in the long run, that peculiar state of body which they call "*l'alcoolisme des gens du monde.*" A peasant may get perfectly drunk once a month and yet be a very small consumer of alcohol; a gentleman, without ever being even tipsy, may consume five times as much alcohol as the peasant.

The Education of the Body.

Artful Drinking.

Peasant and Gentleman.

Possible Allowance of a comfortable Frenchman.

The following account of what a comfortable Frenchman *may* consume in the twenty-four hours is founded on actual observation, but is not intended to represent temperate habits in France, which will be dealt with later. This first description may stand for the habits of a drinker who lives in a state of constant stimulation only.

The Morning Drink.

On rising in the morning he will probably take either brandy, or sherry, or white French wine. The working men now prefer brandy. In former times white wine was more drunk, especially in the wine districts. If French wine is preferred the moderate quantity will be half a bottle, but it is easy to go beyond, and a lover of wine will finish his bottle without stopping half-way. He will eat a crust of bread with it, and perhaps a morsel of Gruyère cheese. There is no pleasanter early breakfast; it is much pleasanter than the sickening English combination of sweet coffee and fat ham; the wine is exhilarating, and by its help the day opens cheerfully; its pleasures seem attractive and its duties light. Unfortunately, the white wine habit is known to tell on the nervous system in course of time. Before *déjeuner* the moderate drinker will go to a café and take his *apéritif*, usually a vermouth, and perhaps something else. Vermouth is simply white wine in which aromatic herbs have been infused. At *déjeuner* he will drink a bottle of red wine. Immediately after he returns to the café and orders coffee, which is invariably accompanied by brandy, and of that he takes a large dram. If inclined to rest some time in the establishment he will order a little glass of *liqueur*, and if he meets with friends they may perhaps treat each other to different kinds of *liqueurs* for the sake of good fellowship and variety. At five o'clock he returns to the

*Un apéritif.*

Déjeuner.

Café.

café for his absinthe. In ordinary times he will be content with one absinthe, when inclined to exceed he will take two, or possibly even three, or a mint in the place of the third. Just before dinner he may think it necessary to "open his appetite" with an *apéritif*, say bitters and curaçao. At dinner he drinks a bottle of common wine, and possibly some good wine at dessert if he dines with friends. After dinner come liqueurs, and then he drinks ale in a café all the evening whilst he smokes. This lasts till eleven o'clock, when he goes to bed. He has never shown the slightest sign of tipsiness all day, and is ready to go through the same course on the morrow. Meanwhile, in case he should feel thirsty, he has a "*verre d'eau*" in his bedroom, which means a very pretty little glass tray with a glass, a small sugar-basin, a decanter of water, and a small decanter of pure cognac.

Absinthe. Bitters. Dinner. Ale. *Un Verre d'eau.*

The state of this Frenchman is one of incessant alcoholic stimulation. If he takes hard exercise he may bear it for many years, if not, he will feel the effects of it, and the physician will privately note his case as one of *alcoolisme des gens du monde.*

Now, with regard to the common people in France, the old habit of drinking large quantities of wine in the wine districts seems to have done wonderfully little harm. As the subject interests me I have asked for the opinion of several physicians, and they all say that the drinking of *pure* French wine is harmless if accompanied by exercise. Without exercise it may establish gout. The physicians dread the effects of spirits even in small quantities; they look upon wine as a kind of safeguard, and on spirits as a terrible danger. The reader may

Habit of drinking French Wine. Spirits.

remember a passage in Lewes's *Life of Goethe*, where the biographer says that the illustrious German "was fond of wine, and drank daily his two or three bottles. The amount he drank never did more than exhilarate him; never made him unfit for work or for society. Over his wine he sat some hours." Lewes appended to this passage a quotation from Liebig in which he says that amongst the Rhinelanders "a jolly companion drinks his seven bottles every day, and with it grows as old as Methuselah, is seldom drunk, and has at most the Bardolph mark of a red nose."

German Wine-drinking.

Wine has never been much of an evil in France except as a cause of useless expense. A Frenchman's wine bill is usually out of proportion to his income, especially in the present day, when common wine is no longer cheap enough to make the quantity consumed a matter of indifference, nor yet dear enough to impose the other and still more effectual economy of abstinence, except in the poorest classes. For my part, I am convinced that to grow sound light wine, as the French once did at marvellously cheap rates (a penny a bottle or even less in years of great abundance), is an immense blessing to a community, because it is the most effectual rival of strong spirits.[1] Sound light wine exhilarates, but it does not brutalise; brandy, acting on excitable brains, drives many literally mad. The effect of dear wine in France has not been favourable to temperance, but the contrary,

Wine a useless Expense.

Advantage of very cheap Wine.

Consequence of dearness in Wine.

[1] There have been years in the memory of living men when anybody who would take two barrels to a wine-grower might carry away one of them full of wine (the wine being worth less than the wood); and when for the payment of one sou a man might drink wine as if it were water.

by increasing the consumption of poisonous spirituous liquors. That has now reached such a pitch in the working classes that drunkenness of the most dangerous kind—the kind unknown in wine countries—is established amongst them as it is in the lower orders of London or Glasgow. In fact, the worst form of Scotch dram-drinking is common in the great French cities.

Dangerous Drunkenness.

If a French workman buys wine he must buy it at a low price, and in Paris, where the octroi duties are so high, it is impossible that cheap wine can be unadulterated. I will not presume to say what the "wine" is made of, I do not pretend to know, but at present prices it cannot be the juice of the grape.

Adulteration.

Now, let us pass to the pleasanter subject of French temperance. It is very commonly believed in England that every Frenchman must have his café to go to and his theatre. As a matter of fact provincial French people go very little to the theatre, and the cafés, though flourishing, are maintained by a remarkably small number of *habitués*. Many Frenchmen never go to a café at all, unless perhaps occasionally when travelling. Amongst the daily visitors there is an immense difference in drinking habits. I remember a middle-aged gentleman who confined himself to one tiny glass (like a thimble) of pure cognac per day, an allowance that he never exceeded. Another visits the café every day regularly at six in the afternoon and takes his absinthe, a third drinks only ale, a fourth confines himself to coffee with the *petit verre*.

How the Cafés are maintained.

Differences in drinking Habits.

With regard to the consumption of wine, there are great numbers of half-bottle drinkers at each meal. The women generally belong to this sect, and half a bottle of light wine, taken whilst eating, is but a gentle stimulus,

The half-bottle Persuasion.

especially if mixed with water. The use of water with wine varies very much. I never in my life saw a French peasant mix his wine with water; there may be peasants who do it, but I have never met with one. The peasant will drink water abundantly by itself, but when he gets wine he seems to think that to water it would be a sin against the rites of Bacchus. When there is wine on a peasant's table, the water-bottle is not to be seen.

Peasants like pure Wine.

On the contrary, in the middle and upper classes, it is the general custom to mix water with the *vin ordinaire* whilst people are eating, but the finer wines are never watered. Then you have all degrees of watering. You have the gentleman who puts three drops of water in his wine in deference to custom, though it is a mere form; you have the conscientious man who mixes the two liquids carefully in equal quantities; and you have the drinker of *eau rougie*, who would probably be a water-drinker, like an English teetotaller, if he had not before his eyes the dread of the French proverb "*Les buveurs d'eau sont méchants.*"

Wine and Water.

I remember, however, one of those drinkers of "reddened water," who used to maintain that a few drops of wine almost infinitely diluted gave the taste of the grape-juice far more delicately and exquisitely than the unalloyed grape-juice itself. The reader may try the experiment, if he likes. Let him take a glass of water, and just redden it with claret. If he fails to appreciate the exquisite taste of the beverage, it will, at least, inflict no injury on his constitution. Unless, indeed, as the old bacchanalians affirmed, water brings on the dropsy; for what saith the good Maistre Jean Le Houx, the gentle singer who immortalised the *Vau de Vire?*

"Reddened Water."

Jean le Houx.

*" On n'a deffendu l'eau, au moins en beuuerie*
*De peur que je ne tombe en une hydropisie*
*Je me perds si j'en boy*
*En l'eau n'y a saueur. Prendray je pour breuuage*
*Ce qui n'a poinct de goust? Mon voisin qui est sage*
*Ne le faict, que je croy."*

French total Abstainers between Meals.

In France there is a large class of total abstainers *between meals*. These observe rigorously the rule of never drinking except at meal-times. They have a set phrase by which they are known, their shibboleth. This phrase is "*Je ne bois jamais rien entre mes repas.*" They are not teetotallers, as they drink at *déjeuner* and dinner, but between these periods they observe a strict abstinence, like the Mahometans in the Ramadan fast between the rising and the setting of the sun. They pretend that they are never thirsty, but I do not believe them; it is merely the pride of their sect.

English writers are often on the look-out for subjects of accusation against the French (this attention is reciprocal), and they generally hit upon immorality. May I give them a hint that may be of use, at least in affording the refreshment of change? Why do they not accuse the French of gormandism? There are a hundred proofs of that vice for one of the other. It is visible everywhere in France, and in some parts of the country it predominates over all other pleasures of life. Most well-to-do French people who live in the rural districts and are excessively dull find a solace and an interest twice a day in the prolonged enjoyments of the table. There is no country in the world where so much thought and care, and so much intelligence, are devoted to feeding as in France, and the reward is that the French

French Gormandism.

The Solace of dull Lives.

France the Land of good Living.

govern the world of good eating, and their language is the language not of diplomacy only but of that far more important matter the *menu*. They will talk seriously for an indefinite length of time about the materials of dinners and their preparation. When the English newspapers give an account of a royal feast, they do not tell you what the distinguished personages had to eat, but French reporters give the *menu* in detail. Some French newspapers present their subscribers with a *menu* for every day in the year, others announce what will be the dinner at a great hotel.

Importance of the *menu*.

*Gourmand* and *Gourmet*.

The love of good cheer in France has all the characters of vulgarity and refinement. In former times *gourmand* meant a judge of eating, and *gourmet* a judge of wine. We find those interpretations still in the dictionaries, even in Littré and Lafaye, but custom has given the words a new significance. *Gourmet* is now universally understood to refer to eating and not to drinking. *Gourmand* has acquired a lower sense between *gourmet* and *glouton*. The *gourmand* of the present day is a passionate lover of good eating, who gives it inordinate attention, and usually eats more than is good for him.

The *Glouton*.

The *glouton* is the quite unintelligent animal feeder who stuffs himself like a pig; and there is a still worse word,

The *Goulu*.

the *goulu*, which means the voracious man who throws

The *Goinfre*.

eatables down his throat. There is also *goinfre*, the man who is very disagreeable to other people in his eating, which he does to excess and dirtily.

The *gourmet*, on the contrary, is a product of high civilisation. He enjoys with discrimination, and is above the vulgarity of estimating the quality of dishes by their elaboration or their costliness. He values the commonest things, if they are good of their own kind; he will praise

well-baked bread or pure water. He is entirely on the side of temperance. A French *gourmet* once said to me, "I am excessively fond of oysters, but never exceed one dozen, being convinced that after the first dozen the palate has become incapable of fully appreciating the flavour." A real *gourmet* preserves his palate in the healthiest and most natural condition. He would not cover an oyster with pepper, nor even squeeze a lemon over it. Plain things are often preferred by a true gourmet to richer things. The uninitiated drink wine and eat cakes at the same time. A *gourmet* would not do that unless the wine were unworthy of his attention; with a wine of any quality he would eat a crust of bread. A *gourmet* prefers the simplest meal, such as a fried mutton chop, if it is really well cooked, to an elaborate banquet where the cookery is less than excellent. In Thackeray's imitation of Horace (*Persicos Odi*) he expresses contempt for "Frenchified fuss" in the first stanza, but in the second he exactly hits the taste of a French *gourmet* in praising the good qualities of a simple dish—

Temperance of the true *Gourmet.*

Thackeray a *Gourmet.*

> "But a plain leg of mutton, my Lucy,
> I pr'ythee get ready at three:
> Have it smoking, and tender, and juicy,
> And what better meat can there be?"

I knew a Parisian who was a *gourmet* in Thackeray's manner, and his way of living was to order one dish of meat, one of vegetables, and a little dessert, at an excellent and expensive *restaurant à la carte*. He did not desire the more abundant feeding at the *restaurants à prix fixe* and the *tables d'hôte*. He drank very moderately

A Parisian *Gourmet.*

also; in a word, he lived as a gentleman ought to live, without excess, yet with perfect appreciation.

The *Gourmet* keeps up Prices.

The influence of the French *gourmet* on the price of eatables is remarkable. The dealers know that extravagant prices will be given for anything that is exceptionally good. The result is that the Parisian connoisseur in good living feeds very expensively, and his tendency is to maintain a high standard of costliness.

The accusation against the French that they are a nation of gormandisers is to be understood with the reserves that I have now indicated, but I must add, in justice, that France is a country of plain living as well as of rich and elaborate living. The peasants, a very numerous class, live with extreme sobriety and simplicity; the soldiers, also a numerous class, live just sufficiently and no more; the priests live simply as a rule, though they are said to enjoy a good dinner when invited to a château, the only pleasure they have. Then you find large classes in which simple living is a matter of necessity, such as the members of religious houses and young people in educational establishments.

France also a Country of Plain Living.

Good Living a Restraint on Population.

Nevertheless, I believe it is true that the love of good living in the middle and upper classes amounts to a serious evil, and actually operates as a restraint on population since it would be as cheap to feed a large family in a very plain way as to feed a small one on luxuries. My opinion is that luxury in food and dress are the two great parents of evil in France.

England a Country of Extremes.

In drinking, England is a country of extremes. It has the misfortune of not being a wine-producing country, with the usual consequence that the consumption of

ardent spirits is very great, and drunkenness of the most dangerous and most brutal kind very common. On the other hand, this horror has produced a reaction going as far in the other extreme, so that there are far more water-drinkers in England than in France. What is called "moderation" is also much more moderate in England. I lunch with an Englishman in London, and observe that he takes perhaps a single glass of claret and nothing after it; a Frenchman equally moderate would take half a bottle, with coffee and cognac afterwards. The same Englishman will never drink in a public-house from January to December; the Frenchman sees no harm in visiting his café every day.

Ardent Spirits in England.

Abstinence and Moderation.

English and French Moderation compared.

Vulgar French people delight in accusing English ladies of dipsomania. Some of them drink, I have known several instances, and I have known instances of the same infirmity in France, but I am quite convinced that Englishwomen in the middle and upper classes are usually more abstemious than French. Comparing people equally sober, equally removed from all suspicion of drunkenness, a bottle of claret would last the English lady a week and the French lady a day. It is true that the English lady might take a glass of port after dinner, but that answers to the Frenchwoman's occasional *liqueur*.

Female Drinking in the two Countries.

I am writing of the present, that is, of the ninth decade of the nineteenth century, when excessive drinking has come to be considered vulgar in England. French accusers delight in taking the worst examples of the past and in representing them as the average of the present. I was reading lately a French book of travels in England, including an account of a visit to a large country house. There are certain signs by which an English critic knows

The Present and the Past.

A French Traveller in England.

at once whether narratives of this kind are genuine or fictitious. A Frenchman who invents anything about England, and pretends that he is recounting a real experience, is sure to invent clumsily. In the present instance, I know by two pieces of evidence that the writer has been drawing upon his imagination. He makes the men in the smoking-room, after dinner, talk about the absent ladies in a style absolutely incompatible with English breeding, and he describes these gentlemen as having all got nearly or completely drunk before they were helped to bed by the domestics. This Frenchman has read that such things happened under the Georges, and as he is not describing a real experience he makes our contemporaries drunk to gratify the malevolence of French readers.

His Inventions.

England is now a country of very temperate, very intemperate, and very abstemious people. If a man belongs to the refined classes he will probably take wine in moderation, perhaps in great moderation; if he belongs to the humbler classes he may be a besotted drunkard, a sober workman who appreciates a glass of beer, or an apostle of total abstinence with a blue ribbon in his button-hole. The country spends too much in drink, but its expenditure is gradually diminishing, and the burden of it falls very unequally on the citizens. Looking to the future, which is more interesting than the past, I may add that it is hopeful for England, which is improving, and discouraging for France, which is going from bad to worse.

Present Condition of England.

As to eating, the English are rarely either *gourmands* or *gourmets*, but they have a rooted belief in the value of an abundant flesh diet, which cannot be good for health

Eating in England.

unless accompanied by hard exercise. Although the English are not extravagant like the French from a love of expensive delicacies, they are extravagant in the display of great abundance. Immense pieces of the finest meat in the world appear on English tables, and then disappear to be replaced by others equally imposing. People tell you of the quantities eaten by their servants with a smile of indulgence. In the poorer classes there is waste of another kind from simple ignorance and want of culinary economy and art. In a French household the smallest fragments make a little dish, and nothing is lost; in England this kind of economy is practised least where it would be most required. In the French middle and lower classes the daily use of soups is an economy, as the soup is the final save-all of the little establishment, and it presents the materials in the most nourishing and digestible form. As to extravagance, the well-to-do French and English may be equally extravagant, but in different ways, and as to temperance in eating, there is little difference. The French eat heavier meals, but they eat less frequently. Each nation accuses the other of over-eating, and doctors say that the accusation is merited in both cases.

Peculiar Form of English Extravagance.

Waste in the Poorer Classes.

Utility of Soups in France.

Both Countries Extravagant, but in Different Ways.

One is sometimes struck in England by the combination of a very stately service with a very plain table. Fine linen, expensive plate, formidably dignified servants, and all this ceremony about a leg of mutton and some boiled potatoes. Thackeray amused himself with noting this contrast. It is a revelation of English character, which is deeply attached to state and style, but is really not given over to sensual pleasures. Occasionally the English go rather far, perhaps, in the direction of plain

Stately Service and plain Table.

English Asceticism.

living. The total abstainer gives you pure water, the *very* moderate drinker forgets to pass the decanter, and so do his servants. I remember being invited once to an early dinner in the country and riding to it several miles in drenching rain. I was cold and wet, for it was winter, and I looked forward confidently to warm old English hospitality; but my host had *principles*, and principles are nothing if you do not act up to them, so he gave me a slice of cold beef with a glass of cold water. That *menu* was easily and long remembered.

# CHAPTER V

## THRIFT

THRIFT is classed as a social virtue, because in a thrifty society few people fall upon others for their support. The thrifty man looks to his own independence during sickness, and to that of his wife and children after his death, so that he is never burdensome either to public or private charity.

Why Thrift is a Social Virtue.

Socially, then, the thrifty man is an acceptable member of the community; but when we inquire closely into the nature of thrift we often find it associated with meanness, and therefore the esteem for it has never been quite without reserve.

Thrift often associated with Meanness.

To apply this to the English and French, I may begin by admitting, quite frankly, that the French are incomparably superior to the English in thrift. The natural talent for thrift is far commoner in France than in England. The French are prudent as a rule, and very capable of limiting their desires; they have also a great love of independence, a horror of debt, a readiness to accept and avow a modest social position, and they have (in spite of apparent frivolity) a foresight that looks a long way into the future. That is the good side of the French character as regards thrift, but there is a bad side

French Qualities favourable to Thrift.

French Defects favourable to Thrift.

at least equally favourable to it. There is a pettiness in the French mind which adapts it well for dealing with details, and gives it a keen zest for very small economies. An Englishman is astonished by nothing so much as this pettiness when he first knows the French as they really are, and begins to perceive what close and earnest attention they will give to what seem to him ridiculously small matters. In many French people, I do not say in all, there is something worse than pettiness, namely, downright meanness, and this too is highly favourable to thrift. This meanness is not confined to the poorer classes, or to the *bourgeoisie*, it may be found in all classes.

French Meanness.

The English have less both of the Qualities and the Defects.

In England the qualities and the defects which are favourable to thrift are much rarer. The English are not so prudent as the French, not so capable of limiting their desires, not so ready to accept humble positions contentedly, and if they have foresight they too often find reasons for not acting according to its dictates. But, on the other hand, the English have a hearty contempt for pettiness. An Englishman who is mean is a very rare exception. The English nature finds no satisfaction in paying less for anything than it is really worth; it does not wish to pay more, but in consideration for its own self-respect it wishes to give the full value.

Egoism and Altruism in Thrift.

A further examination of the conduct of thrifty people leads to the conclusion that thrift may be either self-denying or denying to other people. A man has a family; he feeds himself luxuriously and his family as poorly as possible; at the year's end he will have saved more than if he had lived on potatoes and kept his family well. In large families thrift often means refusing things to the

wife and children whilst the master is self-indulgent, like the Sultan of Turkey, who wallows in luxury whilst his ragged soldiers starve. The commonest English form of this selfishness is to spend in drink whilst denying necessaries to the children; but this is not thrift, as there are no savings.

Thrift may be one of the noblest forms of altruism. I know all the details about a very pretty instance that occurred in England two generations before mine. A lady, well-to-do and childless, had three little penniless nieces. By pure self-denial she saved three fortunes for them, enough to keep them in comfort all their days. This self-denial was all the harder in her case that she belonged to an aristocratic family, and might have excusably spent her income for the maintenance of her rank.

A pretty Instance of Unselfish Thrift.

The strongest motive for French thrift is to provide dowries for daughters. It being an accepted rule that every girl must have a dowry, a Frenchman is not discouraged by the smallness of the sum he is able to put by. This enables him to begin, and if a little prosperity comes to him it is a satisfaction to make the dowry larger. Whilst saving the dowry he learns the art of saving, and applies it afterwards to other purposes.

Dowries for Daughters.

The Dowry an Education in Thrift.

In England there are two terrible discouragements to saving. The first is the exacting character of English opinion with regard to style of living, the contempt felt for people who are not gentlemen and ladies, and the vulgar belief that one cannot be a gentleman or a lady without leading an expensive life. "It costs a great deal of money to be a gentleman," says an English writer, "and a great deal more to be a lady." Well, if this is

Two English Discouragements to Saving.

Gentlemen and Ladies.

so, why not leave gentlemanhood and ladyhood to rich people, and why not be content with simple manhood and womanhood? Nothing can be more admirable than the life of an Englishman who saves money from a sense of duty when the saving implies the great renunciation, the renunciation of the title of "gentleman." A Frenchman, who may live as he likes, knows nothing of that sacrifice.

The Great Renunciation for an Englishman.

English Contempt for small Sums of Money.

The second great discouragement to saving in England is the English contempt for small sums of money. "The Englishman," says Bagehot, "bows down before a great heap and sneers when he passes a little heap." The sneer is perhaps more frequent than the bow. The mention of a small fortune often excites a smile. And the heap need not be a very little one to be sneered at. You may be almost ridiculous for having an income that places you far above want. Three hundred a year is an income that seems really amusing to the well-constituted English mind. I myself have heard a man with five hundred a year called a "beggar," and have seen people smile good-humouredly at more than twice as much. The consequence is that unless an Englishman has the natural instinct of avarice he may think, "What is the good of saving when all I can put by will only be contemptible?"

£300 a Year.

£500 a Year.

Thrift not always general in France.

It is worth noting, as a contrast, that the idea of thrift has not always been general in France. The present French rural aristocracy is thrifty; but the old ideal of a French nobleman included largeness and even prodigality in money matters, which led to the ruin of many a noble house. To be careful and exact was, in the old days, a middle-class virtue, the consequence being that there are

so many *nouveaux riches* in France at the present day. Even now it is not thought well to be too thrifty in high situations. That was President Grévy's fault; President Carnot saves nothing out of his allowance, and is liked for it. The millions claimed by the Orleans family seemed to them a good kind of ballast in troubled waters, but they sank the royal ship.

Grévy and Carnot.

The following may be taken as a rather extreme example of French carefulness. I knew an old bachelor who had £800 a year and not at all an ungenerous disposition, but he enjoyed making little savings. He drove frequently to the neighbouring town, and was quite delighted with an arrangement he made there, by which he was allowed to put up his pony for a penny a time on condition that he harnessed it himself and that the animal had nothing to eat. The pony was avenged by the old gentleman's cook, who was thriftier even than her master, and kept him on short commons.

An Example of French Carefulness.

The spirit of small economies may take a character of positive meanness. Servants may be, and sometimes are, so wretchedly fed that they will not stay in the place. Relations, as eating beings, may be so inhospitably received that they finally cease their visits. All hospitality may come to an end, invitations being declined in dread of the obligation of reciprocity, till at last the thrifty household realises its perfect ideal of spending nothing on anybody. French tradesmen are well acquainted with this class of customers, who are incessantly trying to get something out of them. The ingenuity of such customers goes beyond anything that would be believed in England. French novelists sometimes amuse themselves by depicting the petty craft of

Effects of Extreme Thrift.

Tradesmen and Thrifty Customers.

the meanest natures. The novelists cannot go beyond the truth, with all their inventiveness.

English Improvidence.

As a contrast to this you have English improvidence, especially in the genteel professional class, where the whole energy of the master of the house is devoted to earning fairy gold, the gold that immediately vanishes. He spends that he may succeed and succeeds that he may spend. He brings up a family with genteel habits and no capital. Apparently prosperous and enviable, he enjoys in reality nothing that prosperity ought to give, since he has neither leisure to think, nor liberty, nor peace of mind, nor any hope of rest except in the grave.[1]

Results of French Thrift.

The final results of French thrift, for the nation, are as follows:—

The Poorer Class.

1. The poorer classes are better fed and better clothed. This is a real good, because they needed it. They are probably stronger than they used to be.

Increase of Idlers.

2. The idle class is constantly increasing in numbers, not because it is prolific, but by the accession of *nouveaux riches*. This is not perceptibly a benefit.

Effect of Thrift on Population.

3. The *extreme* spirit of thrift will not allow population to increase with riches. It operates as a powerful

[1] An interesting example of English improvidence came to my knowledge recently. A professional man of great talent, who had been eminently successful, died, leaving a widow and a large family of children. At the time of his death the children were all married. The widow was left without a penny, and was anxious to find a situation, because the married children *all living up to the extreme limit of their incomes, as their father had done*, were unable to subscribe an annuity. In France they would probably all have had savings, and, with the national love of the mother and sense of filial duty, would have cheerfully hastened to provide for her old age.

restraint on procreation even in wealthy families. This weakens France relatively to England and Germany.

Effects of Luxury.

4. Thrift has produced wealth, wealth luxury, and luxury also acts as a restraint on population, because, in a luxurious age, children are too expensive.

Weakening of the Warlike Temper

5. As for national defence, the wealth of France is of use for all material things, such as ships, fortresses, and guns, but by increasing the love of comfort and commerce it has enfeebled the warlike temper of the nation.

Temptation to Enemies.

6. As the wealth of France continually increases, and her defenders do not increase with it, she becomes every year a more tempting prize for an enemy.

# CHAPTER VI

## CLEANLINESS

ENTERING London one day with a friend in the railway train, I asked him what, in his opinion, would have been the impressions of an ancient Roman if he could have accompanied us. What would an inhabitant of Augustan Rome think of English civilisation in Victorian London?

English Civilisation.

My friend at once answered, "He would think we were a very dirty race, and this impression would be so strong and so unfavourable that he would be slow to perceive our superiority in other respects."

Belief in English Cleanliness.

This is not the general English opinion. The English believe themselves to be a clean people. Foreigners are dirty, Englishmen are clean; that is one of the most obvious distinctions between them.

The English upper classes are clean, but cleanliness of any high degree is a very modern virtue amongst them. It is an invention of the nineteenth century. I am just old enough to remember the time when the use of the morning sponge-bath became general amongst boys and young men of my own generation. Men and women born at the close of the eighteenth century did as French people do to-day; they took a warm bath occasionally

The Morning Sponge-bath. Earlier Habits.

for cleanliness,[1] and they took shower-baths when they were prescribed by the physician for health, and they bathed in summer seas for pleasure, but they did not wash themselves all over every morning. I remember an old gentleman, of good family and estate, arguing against this strange, newfangled custom, and maintaining that it was quite unnecessary to wash the skin in modern times, as the impurities were removed by linen. However, the new custom took deep root in England, because it became one of the signs of class. It was adopted as one of the habits of a gentleman, and afterwards spread rather lower, though it is not yet by any means universal. It is chiefly upon this habit that the *present* English claim to superior cleanliness is founded. In former times the English were proud of using more water than the French for ordinary ablutions, and they pretended to believe that the French were unacquainted with the use of soap, because they did not provide public pieces of soap in the bedchambers of their hotels.

Present English Claim to Cleanliness.

The cold sponge-bath is perhaps used in England more for health than for cleanliness, as a prolonged stay in a warm bath cleans much better, and the treatment by perspiration according to old Roman or modern oriental usage is incomparably the most effectual cleanser of all. It is characteristic of the English to have set hardihood above the ideal perfection of cleanliness, and to have avoided the luxurious and enervating bath in which the ancients took delight.

The best Cleanser.

Hardihood above Cleanliness.

[1] This is rather too favourable to the English of that day, as they certainly did not take warm baths so frequently as French people do now. They had not the conveniences. Few private houses had a bath-room and few towns had public baths.

English Pride in Hardihood.

Englishmen are proud of being able to sponge themselves with cold water all through the winter. I have known one who used to lie down in ice-cold water every morning; others boast of a morning plunge in sea or river at Christmas time, and they continue the habit as long as their constitutions will hold out.

Concealed Dirtiness.

English physicians are severe on the concealed dirtiness of many people in the middle classes, who seem clean with their false collars and cuffs and their washed faces and hands. One does not expect much cleanliness amongst the labouring population of any modern country,

Efforts of the Poor towards Cleanliness.

but the working classes in England deserve great credit for every effort they make in the direction of cleanliness, because they have not the facilities of the rich. I myself have often seen colliers in Lancashire naked to the waist and giving themselves a thorough wash in plentiful hot water with soap, and when greater facilities are given in the shape of public baths they make use of them. It would be easy for manufacturers to encourage cleanliness by having baths at their factories. Some have actually done this.

The state of England with regard to personal cleanliness may be considered as partially satisfactory, and it

French Warm Baths.

is improving. As to the French, their strong point is their excellent institution of warm baths, which are to be found even in the smallest towns with a complete

Effects of the Warm Bath in France.

service. A tired Frenchman, arriving at anything like a town, looks to his hot bath as the best restorative. If these baths are a pleasure to a man he will be clean; if he does not like them he will not be so clean as the Englishman who sponges himself by way of discipline, whether he likes it or not. However, English example

has had a wonderful effect in improving the apparatus of cleanliness in French private houses. English baths, ewers, basins, and other complicated toilet arrangements are copied extensively in France. If you visit a pot-shop in a small provincial town, quite remote from the Channel, you will find English washstand services of full size, or good French copies of them; and if you go to the ironmonger's you will find all kinds of baths for domestic use, including English "tubs." In French houses, where the old small ewers and basins are retained, they are now almost invariably supplemented by a capacious tin water-jug on the floor. In fact, the French are becoming a cleaner people, thanks to the example of their neighbours, who are about forty years in advance.

Consequences of English Example.

A French crowd (I am not the first to notice this) always *appears* cleaner than an English crowd. This is due to the self-respecting habits of the French lower classes. In England the poor people in towns will wear old and dirty things that have belonged to middle-class people; in France they wear cheap things of their own and take care to have them clean, especially on Sunday or a fête-day. Peasants' and workmen's wives look as clean as ladies; in fact, their washed caps, prettily ironed, have a fresher appearance than ladies' bonnets. The men, too, in their new blouses, appear cleaner than a *bourgeois* in a black coat. In summer, all the young peasants look as if they put on a new straw hat every Sunday.

Cleanly Appearance of French Crowds.

Reasons for it.

Much of this external cleanliness is due merely to the absence of coal-smoke. In London and Manchester it is difficult and expensive to be clean. The cheery and

Effects of Coal-smoke.

bright external appearance of French houses is due to the same cause, and now the common use of coal is spoiling it in some places. As for English houses in large and smoky towns, the melancholy dinginess of the outer walls is accepted as a matter of course, but cleanliness has its revenge in the interior and even on the whitened doorstep. There is one point as to which the English are greatly superior to the French, especially to middle-class provincial families,—they renew paper and paint. The good old-fashioned French way was to neglect papering and painting till further neglect could make it no worse, and then to think no more of the matter. There is a strong conventionalism about these subjects everywhere. In the inside of a room English people are more particular about the walls and ceiling, French people about the floor. There is many a middle-class French dining-room where the only beauty is the extreme cleanliness of the bare boards. The English like carpets, which are more favourable to comfort than to cleanliness, the French prefer the healthy waxed oak *parquet*, and often content themselves with a deal *plancher* or red tiles.

English Towns.

Paper and Paint. The old-fashioned French Way.

Carpet and *Parquet*.

The humbler classes in England have a great superiority in their love of whitewash. The passion for whitewash which has been so disastrous in churches is excellent in farm-houses, and I have known many a farm-house in Lancashire that was kept fresh and pleasant by the use of it. In French farm-houses it seems to be perfectly unknown; and although their interiors are admirably adapted for pictorial treatment, and have been charmingly painted by Edouard Frère and others, the rich browns of the coarsely-plastered walls are really nothing

English Love of Whitewash.

Whitewash unknown in French Farm-houses.

but dirt, though delightful in colour and texture from an artist's point of view.[1]

French Bedding.

The French are very careful about the cleanliness of their bedding. I have often in my travels slept in very poor country inns, but was always sure of clean, if coarse, sheets, as well as a clean table-cloth and napkin.

English and French Water-closets. French Neglect.

The English are incomparably superior to the French in their care and cleanliness about water-closets and everything of that kind. French incompetence, stupidity, and neglect of this matter are indefensible. The only possible explanation is that when people have once got into the habit of neglecting any particular thing the habit of neglect becomes fixed, even when it is attended by great inconvenience. To borrow an illustration from a pleasanter subject, I may observe that many French farmers, and, I believe, more Irish, have a fixed habit of neglecting the repair of harness except with bits of string. Certainly, in the better class of French houses, an attempt is made to keep the water-closet in order; but as it has always been badly organised at the beginning this is very difficult. The French might learn all about these inventions from the English, who thoroughly understand them.

In conclusion, France and England may be ranked amongst the tolerably clean nations, England taking the lead; but real cleanliness is not general in either. What there is of it is confined to limited classes, and anything like an ideal perfection of cleanliness is the peculiarity of individuals who have a natural genius for it and find a pleasure in it. The majority prefer a moderate degree of dirtiness as being more conducive to their true com-

Comfort of Moderate Dirtiness.

[1] Especially in combination with the beautiful colour of the waxed walnut furniture and the red hangings of the beds.

fort. A certain English poet used to wear a dirty shirt for comfort, and a clean one over it for show. That exactly represents the feelings of ordinary mankind, who have no objection to a little cleanliness in deference to custom, provided that it is only external, and that they may have the satisfactions of dirt beneath, like a cherished secret sin under a mantle of piety. As for the really poor, who are miserably clad, it has been pointed out by Mr. Galton that dirt is a necessity for them in cold weather; it is the poor man's under-shirt.

The Poor Man's Under-Shirt.

## CHAPTER VII

### COURAGE

I THINK it must be admitted that there has been an apparent decline in national courage both in England and France during the latter half of the nineteenth century. They now, both of them, shrink from war as they did not shrink in former times, and when the *casus belli* would have been clear to the Englishman and the Frenchman of more heroic days their descendants prefer to wink at it. We are no longer quite certain that national courage was a great virtue, and there are certain considerations that may console us for its real or apparent diminution.

Seeming Decline in National Courage.

In the first place, Did the men who decided upon former wars *risk their own lives?* When a cabinet of civilians declares war, or when it is declared by a king who is not really a soldier, the act is not one of courage at all, but of political wisdom or folly. Or if a military king with a standing army declares war, the act is not one of national courage; it is only a demonstration of the military caste. When the nation itself is the army, and when it declares war through its freely-elected representatives, then the act is one of national courage; but how often has a war been declared in that way? Nations do

Personal Risk.

Nations do not desire War.

not desire war, and the better they are educated the less they wish for it. The only French war in our time which really excited the enthusiasm of the nation was that for the liberation of Italy. The French had no enthusiasm whatever for the Crimean War, which they looked upon as an English enterprise; they had none for the Mexican, and there was only a little noisy surface excitement in favour of the war of 1870. Since then the nation has really had the control of its own affairs, and has shown no warlike tendencies. The Tonquin enterprise was ministerial, and ruined the minister who undertook it. The French people would not even support a vigorous Egyptian policy. Its only national courage is that which takes the form of waiting calmly for the German onslaught.

Rarity of Warlike Enthusiasm in France.

Tonquin.

Egypt.

Neither England nor France now ventures to attack a really first-class Power; but they exercise their military strength against weak, half-civilised peoples. England breaks the Zulu power, but not the Russian. France advances her African frontier, but not her European. France now exactly imitates the English policy of expansion out of Europe, and of doing nothing in Europe until she can find an ally.

Turning against Weak Peoples.

They are still nominally Great Powers, but they now belong in reality to a second class which might be defined as that of the nations that do not fight without allies except against feeble potentates. Neither one nor the other preserves those illusions about its own strength which are necessary for heroic action. What is more, the other nations have lost the old fear of England and France, whose mutual distrust breaks forth on every possible occasion and deprives them of the one source of real strength—association.

France and England now Second-class Powers.

The kind of national courage which consists in offering a determined though hopeless resistance to a successful enemy was very nobly displayed by the French after Sedan, especially during the siege of Paris. Some English writers called this mere obstinacy, and had nothing but contemptuous blame for it, yet I venture to say that if an invading army surrounded London the English would show exactly the same kind of noble obstinacy themselves. In such a case a nation does not fight without a purpose, though it may struggle without hope. It fights for its self-respect.

The Siege of Paris.

This is the sort of courage that second-class Powers may still retain, they may reserve themselves for a fierce and prolonged defence. There remains for them a peculiar danger. It might happen that two Powers, not quite of the first rank, might fight each other because they dared not assault the greatest Powers. A superfluity of unexercised courage might explode in a war between England and France, because one dared not fight Russia, nor the other Germany. There have been moments when this seemed very likely to happen. The dangerous effects of bottled-up courage were curiously displayed in the time of the Paris Commune. The National Guards had been expecting to be led against the Prussians in a grand sortie, but were always put off till the peace came. They had their rifles and their bottled-up courage, so they rushed into conflict with the "Versaillais."

Courage possible for Second-class Powers.

Danger of bottled-up Courage. The Paris Commune.

For individual courage the two peoples are nearly on a par, but they differ in their training. It is unpleasant to have to confess that brutal and barbarous customs are favourable to the development of courage, yet some of

Individual Courage.

them unquestionably are so, and a higher civilisation might have a difficulty in replacing them. Football, as practised in English public schools, is a brutal pastime, but it is an excellent discipline in courage. French duelling, though infinitely more refined in its forms, is in principle thoroughly barbarous, but as a school of courage there is nothing to equal it, and the great advantage of it in that respect is the constant possibility of an encounter that hangs over the head of every Frenchman, and accustoms him to the idea of danger. He goes through life like an armed knight riding through a wood. In saying "every Frenchman" I exaggerated, because, in fact, men are very differently exposed to the danger of duelling in France. Peasants never fight duels, workmen hardly ever, but there is not a gentleman, or an officer, or a deputy, or a journalist, who is not ready to go on the field of private battle at a moment's notice. It is true that these encounters rarely end fatally, yet there is always danger, if only from accident. An intimate French friend of mine, when he had a duel on his hands, would go home to his wife and say, "Now, my dear, I must be left very quiet, as I have to fight to-morrow morning;" then he would go to bed and sleep till four o'clock, when he drank nothing but a glass of water before facing lead or steel.

Football.

Duelling.

Danger in Duels.

I have a poor opinion of the sort of courage which consists in looking on with tranquil nerves whilst others suffer. However, this base valour may sometimes be of use. The English may acquire it to some extent by witnessing pugilistic combats, the French of the south by seeing bull-fights in the arenas of Nîmes and Arles; but it is only a very small proportion of the population in

Boxing.

Bull-fights.

England and France that now witnesses these things, the spectators are not comparable in numbers to the vast Roman public that hardened its heart in the gladiatorial shows.

Field Sports.

As for field sports, those practised in England require little courage except in horsemanship for English hunting. In France there are dangerous boar-hunts. It is, however, only in some parts of France that this amusement is to be had, and it is practised by comparatively few persons, chiefly amongst the richer gentry. Field sports are good for keeping up the energy of semi-barbarous aristocracies, which, in the absence of war, might lapse into indolence without them.

Courage in the Common People.

Courage is kept up amongst the common people chiefly by dangers repeatedly incurred in their ordinary avocations. This discipline of experience with boats, horses, bulls, and other dangerous things or creatures, is common both to England and France. In a word, as to the lower classes, they are in the same situation in both countries, except that the humble Frenchman has to undergo military service, which is a fine school, especially in the cavalry and artillery. Young English boyhood, in the middle and higher classes, is in a better situation for acquiring manliness than French boyhood, because it has more liberty. I have not, however, noticed that French boys were timid for themselves (except in talking), it is their parents and teachers who are timid for them.

Military Service.

French Boys.

# PART VI

# CUSTOM

# CHAPTER I

## CHRONOLOGY

Dissimilarity between French and English.

IT is a commonplace that the French and English of to-day are extremely unlike each other—wonderfully unlike each other, considering that they are such near neighbours, and the two principal representatives of western civilisation in Europe.

Has the unlikeness always been as marked as it is now, or has there been a time in the past history of the two nations when they resembled each other on some points now marked by trenchant differences?

Varying Degrees of Dissimilarity.

The answer appears to be that the French and English have at certain periods of the past been much less unlike each other than they are now, but yet that the extreme of dissimilarity has been reached at a later period, and that, in the present day, the slow but sure action of causes that may be indicated is bringing about a diminution of that extreme dissimilarity, without, however, giving grounds for any belief or hope that the two nations can ever be very like each other in the future.

Recent historians, especially Mr. Freeman, have taught us to realise much more clearly than we did thirty years ago the truth that the kings of the House of Anjou were French kings, and that the governing classes

A French-*Noblesse* in England.

in the England which they ruled were essentially a French *noblesse*. The Frenchifying influence of kings and nobles was resumed in another way by the Stuart dynasty, and might have gone on gradually approximating the entire English nation to French customs, had not a great mental revolution occurred in England and Scotland, which made the British thenceforward a peculiar people, strongly differing not only from the French but from all the other continental nations whatever. The result of that revolution, as it affects our own time, is that England resembles no nation in the world except her own colonies, including, of course, the great kindred nation in America.

Puritanism.

That revolution was Puritanism, a far more important thing than the change from a monarchical to a republican form of government, because it really changed the mental habits of the nation, making English people more peculiar than they themselves know, and quite incomprehensible by the French; making English customs differ from continental customs more widely than they had ever differed before; changing even the fundamental character of the English mind by chastening and repressing the light-hearted gaiety of merry England and substituting for it a gravity often deepening into gloom; replacing the old morals by severer morals, establishing a strict censorship even over language, substituting for the old religion of Europe a faith less picturesque and less indulgent, consequently less in harmony with French feeling.

Its Effect in making the English unlike the French.

There is a temptation to exaggerate the importance of historical influences when once they have been perceived, but one can hardly exaggerate the importance of Puritanism in the history of the English people, especially in the history of the middle classes, where it is still pre-

dominant at the present day. Both the qualities and the defects that distinguish the British middle classes are for the most part directly traceable to the influence of Puritanism, and so are those feelings and opinions of which they themselves have forgotten the origin.

Puritanism in the British Middle Classes.

It may be thought that Puritanism ought to have been spoken of in the chapters on religion, but I am not sure that it ought to be classed as a special creed. It seems rather to be a reform of custom in the direction of severity and austerity which might be carried out under any creed that permitted rigorous moralists to obtain a great social power. The Wahhabees are the Puritans of Islam, with their particular prohibitions, their gravity of demeanour, their employment of pious forms in language, their severity of social espionage, and control by a vigilant public opinion. But although we may find Puritanism in the most unexpected places, it has never accomplished a work so extensive in its consequences, or likely to be so durable, as the transformation of British sentiment and custom. Only a dispassionate comparison with custom still alive on the continent, but extinct in England, can enable us to realise what that transformation is. A middle-class English family goes to Paris.[1] In due course of time a Sunday comes; or rather, not a Sunday, but a *Dimanche*. The English family has heard of a French Sunday before, but has hitherto been unable to realise it by mere force of imagination. On actually *seeing* it, the impression received is that the French are all intentional Sabbath-breakers—that the amusements which go forward on that day are a clear evidence of French wickedness. Some good English or Scotch people are so shocked

Not a Special Creed.

Transformation of British Sentiment and Custom.

An English Family in Paris.

[1] What follows is sketched from life.

by what they see that they recognise in the defeat of 1870 a just punishment for the national sin of Sabbath-breaking. They do not realise that what they see is not the French Sunday in particular, but the continental Sunday in general; still less do they remember that it is also the English Sunday of pre-Puritanic times—those times now so remote in memory, and yet historically still so near, when the English had not yet become a peculiar people, but lived like the other nations of western Europe. The English of Shakespeare's time went to the theatre on Sunday,[1] and after morning service in the churches they enjoyed many active games and recreations, including dancing, archery, and leaping.[2] Now, as there is nothing more visible than external differences of custom, and as people are separated even more by visible differences than by those which are invisible, and as on one day out of seven those differences are now strikingly apparent between the English and French peoples, it is evident that on the day when they differ most they cannot but feel infinitely more estranged from each other than their ancestors would have felt on the same day.

The old English Sunday.

Sunday a Cause of Separation between English and French.

The modern disapproval felt by British visitors for the behaviour of the French people on Sunday is due in great part to the cautious conduct of the Roman Catholic minority in England, who do not venture to show openly what kind of Sunday it is that their Church would hold to be innocently employed. To avoid scandal in a country

English Roman Catholics.

[1] Plays were performed on Sunday at the court of Queen Elizabeth.

[2] Dancing, archery, leaping, May-games, and morris dances, were expressly permitted by James I. on Sunday in his Book of Sports. He forbade brutal sports only.

where the influence of Puritanism is still powerful, they keep a Sunday that is outwardly almost a Sabbath, and are careful to avoid many recreations that the Church of Rome has always freely permitted. In fact, that Church permits all recreations on the first day of the week that she sanctions on any other, including the most active exercises. What she really forbids is lucrative professional labour. A lawyer should not study a case on Sunday, unless there is urgent necessity, but he is perfectly free to amuse himself, however noisily, in sawing and hammering. A professional artist may do better not to paint (although there is a kind of special toleration for artistic and intellectual pursuits, as being different from mere drudgery), but an amateur, working for recreation, may take his apparatus into the fields. Disinterested studies of all kinds are permitted by the Church on Sunday. It is not in a Roman Catholic country that geologists would be in danger of being stoned, as they have been in Scotland, for hammering at rocks on that day.[1]

The Catholic Sunday.

Studies on Sunday.

Here is the way in which some very religious French people spent a Sunday in 1886, I being one of the party. They went to mass early in the morning, in the chapel of the nearest *château;* then they made preparations for receiving their friends. The friends came after *déjeuner*, two families, in addition to seven guests staying in the house. Some of them remained in the garden, sat about in camp chairs and talked; others went to the village

A French Sunday.

[1] The idea that governs the action of the Church of Rome with regard to the observation of Sunday in countries where she is free to do what she thinks best, appears to be simply the protection of toilers from their own drudgery on one day of the week. She herself keeps the day as a festival, and requires the attendance of the laity at one mass, which may be short and early.

*fête*, where, of course, there was a great deal of dancing and other amusements, which they looked upon quite benevolently. Now, it so happened that those who went to the *fête* were the most religious people of the whole party. On their return we had dinner, and the most pious were by no means the least merry. After dinner the young ladies gave us some music, and one of them played a waltz. This set the young people dancing, and so a dance was improvised which lasted till eleven o'clock, when the guests drove away in the moonlight.[1]

Perhaps the English and Scotch might have given up Sunday dancing more readily than if they had been by nature as saltatory as the French are, but the British have given up many things that they cared for passionately. They gave up salmon-fishing, for example, which was not readily put down in Scotland, and the new legislation attained in the end that supreme success of the legislator when he establishes a very durable custom that would survive the repeal of his law. The power of the dead Puritans is shown in nothing more wonderfully than in the abstinence of British sportsmen when the twelfth of August occurs on a Sunday, and every fowling-piece in the British Islands remains unloaded till Monday morning.

Success of the Puritan Legislation in Scotland.

This history of the divergence from continental custom may be written in two sentences. Puritanism obtained power to legislate, and made recreation illegal on Sunday.

[1] I made inquiry afterwards to ascertain what the parish priest thought of these proceedings, and discovered that he made a distinction. He did not approve of dancing on the public dancing-floors in the village, especially at night, because it sometimes led to wrong, but he was not opposed in any way to Sunday dancing in private houses.

By laws of great severity it established new customs which have now, by lapse of time, become rather old customs; and these have completely obliterated from the ordinary British mind all traces of any recollection that the still older British customs were like those of the continental nations. New Customs.

Opinion has gone even beyond legislation itself, by a process of growth and development. Here is an example. An amateur violinist was staying in an English house for a few days, including the first day of the week. He took his violin out of its case and began to play a little in private. The lady of the house immediately entered the room and begged him to desist. "I am playing sacred music," he answered; "this is a part of Handel's *Messiah*." "That does not signify," was the rejoinder, "the music may be sacred, but the instrument is not." Here is a new development in the distinction between sacred and profane instruments, and a very subtle distinction it is. The organ, the harmonium,—in default of these, even the commonplace piano,—these are sacred instruments, but not the voice-like violin. Yet the violin is but the lyre—"Jubal's lyre"—made capable of far more perfect expression.[1] Development of Opinion. The Violin.

When I lived in Scotland I had occasion to observe another very subtle distinction. It is forbidden to labour on the Sabbath-day, yet I found that the toilsome work of rowing was looked upon as innocent in comparison Rowing and Sailing on Sunday.

[1] The distinction between sacred and profane music is fictitious, merely depending on the title that a musician chooses to give to his composition. The distinction between serious and light music is real, whatever the title. This is so well understood in the Church of Rome that the priests allow any music to be performed in their churches which is the expression of a serious or sublime idea.

with sailing. This was because a white sail had rather a festive appearance. I was especially blamed for not removing the flag from my sailing-boat, for the same reason, though it might be argued that there can be nothing unholy in the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George. In France, sailing regattas are usually held on Sunday, with the full approval of the Church.

Effect of the Sabbath on Literature.

The establishment of Sabbatarian customs in Great Britain had an unforeseen effect on literature. It prepared the way for the success of theological books and periodicals by leaving the day, in the most pious families, without any other recreation than religious reading. The British read ten times as much about theology as the French, and therefore have a much more extensive knowledge of the subject. In France pious people read the *Imitation*, the mass-book, an abridgment of sacred history, and some printed sermons by the most celebrated ecclesiastical orators; but this is not to be compared with the range of English theological reading, both in the Bible itself and in all kinds of elaborate commentaries. As for

French Ignorance of the Bible.

French unbelievers, who are very numerous, they live outside of theology much more easily and completely than their English brethren, and often know so little about it that references to the Old Testament familiar to every Englishman would be unintelligible to them. The modern English political use of the cave of Adullam puzzled Frenchmen exceedingly, as they did not know anything about Adullam. One very curious and unexpected result of Sabbath strictness in Great Britain is that

English prepared for German Criticism.

the British are much better prepared for German exegetic criticism than the French; so that the British often arrive at unbelief by laborious theological reading, whilst the

French, as a general rule, come to it with much less trouble through Voltaire, and retain the Voltairean spirit. Of late years, however, certain scientific influences, especially that of Darwin, have been common to both countries, and the effect of theological studies counts for less, relatively, even in England.

Duelling an old English Custom.

The best example of a difference of custom that is simply chronological is that of duelling. The English, by a real progress, have passed out of this custom; the French have not yet passed out of it, though it is probable that they will do so ultimately. Like all fashions very recently discarded, it seems absurd to those who thought it a part of the order of nature a little time ago. And so completely do we forget the reasons for discarded customs that the English now look upon duelling as quite contrary to reason, having forgotten the ancient reason on which the single combat was founded. Yet it was a very good reason indeed, according to the ideas that our fathers held about the government of the universe.

The old Religious Reason for Duelling.

The old belief, in France and England equally, was that the appeal to arms was an appeal to divine justice, and that God himself would interfere in the battle by protecting the combatant whose quarrel was rightful against the power and malice of his assailant. So long as this belief prevailed, a duel was incomparably more reasonable than is an action-at-law in the present day, for it appealed to infallible instead of to fallible justice, and in addition to being reasonable, it was distinctly a pious act, as the combatant proved his faith by staking his existence on his trust in the divine protection. "He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." The faith of David was the faith of the Middle Ages.

Duelling Irrational without a Providence.

The custom lasted longer than the belief, even in England, and in France it has long survived all faith in supernatural interference. The duel is utterly irrational when people do not believe that God will protect an inferior swordsman, with right on his side, against a better swordsman in the wrong, or that he will spare the innocent by deflecting the course of a bullet well aimed by a wicked adversary.

The Religion of Honour.

There has been, however, the intervention of a sort of secondary religion between the old one and modern unbelief. There has been the religion of honour. According to this, a man of honour was bound to expose his life on certain occasions to the rapier or pistol of a private enemy, and, if he fell, he fell a martyr to this religion of honour, leaving a name unsullied by the stain of cowardice, which was the equivalent of infidelity or apostasy.

The old English Sentiment.

This religion survived in England even so late as the first half of the present century, and it still survives in France. The old English sentiment,—I say the old sentiment because contemporary Englishmen have got so far past it, though it is very recent in mere date,—the old English sentiment was expressed by Thackeray in the challenge sent by Clive Newcome to his cousin Barnes, and in the gratification it afforded to Sir George Tufto and to the Colonel, both of them elderly men. Nevertheless, as Thackeray knew that the religion of duelling was already dead in England when he wrote, he took care to make the action of Clive acceptable by assigning to it filial affection as a motive. The French sentiment about honour was described with disapproval in the case of de Castillonnes and Lord Kew. "Castillonnes had no idea

The French Sentiment about Honour.

but that he was going to the field of honour; stood with an undaunted scowl before his enemy's pistol; and discharged his own, and brought down his opponent, with a grim satisfaction and a comfortable conviction afterwards that he had acted *en galant homme.*" And so, no doubt, he had, not only according to modern French ideas, but according to old English ideas also.

The Newcomes.

General Tufto was of the old school when he said of Sir Barnes Newcome, after he had received Clive's challenge, "At first I congratulated him, thinking your boy's offer must please him, as it would have pleased any fellow *in our time* to have a shot." And the Colonel himself, instead of reprimanding Clive for wishing to commit murder, "regarded his son with a look of beautiful, inexpressible affection. And he laid his hand on his son's shoulder and smiled, and stroked Clive's yellow moustache.

"'And—and did Barnes send no answer to that letter you wrote him?' he said slowly.

"Clive broke out into a laugh that was almost a sob. He took both his father's hands. 'My dear, dear old father, what an—old—trump you are!' My eyes were so dim I could hardly see the two men as they embraced."

All this is much more French (even down to the embracing and the tear-dimmed eyes of the spectator) than the opinions professed about duelling by the English newspapers of 1886. According to them, a man who sends a challenge is ridiculous, and no more. This marks the final extinction of the old sentiment.

Extinction of the old Sentiment

Another indication of this change is the ridicule of duelling on the ground that it is not dangerous. French duelling is constantly represented in English newspapers

as a very safe kind of ceremony, in which a slight scratch only is to be apprehended. As to this, perhaps I may be allowed to give an instance that was brought very near home.

I had been away for several days, and on my return journey dined at a railway station. The waiter had known me for years, and, according to his custom, enlivened my solitary dinner with a little talk. He asked if I had "heard about M. de St. Victor." I had heard nothing. "Because, sir," the waiter continued, "he was killed this morning in a duel in the wood at Fragny." Now, it so happened that my wife and daughter were to have lunched and spent that afternoon with Madame de St. Victor; but as her husband's dead body had been brought back to the château of Montjeu, where he lived, with a sword wound through it, Madame de St. Victor did not receive her friends that day.[1]

A French Duel.

A single event of that kind, occurring in a family not altogether strange to you, does more to make you feel the grim reality of duelling than many newspaper paragraphs. In this particular case the incident arose from a correspondence between two proud and brave gentlemen about their game preserves. One of them had written in a manner that offended the other, and had refused to withdraw his letter. The code of honour then made a duel almost inevitable, and the correspondence being continued very soon led to it. An especially significant thing about this duel was that the conqueror was known

Cause of the Duel.

[1] M. de St. Victor managed the estates belonging to the Countess de Talleyrand, and he lived at her old château of Montjeu, one of the most romantically situated places in France, in the midst of a large well-wooded park upon the hills.

as a remarkably expert swordsman, which the victim was not to the same degree. This demonstrates the real unfairness of duelling, as we see that the weaker or less expert antagonist goes down, whatever may be the righteousness of his cause.

The sense of this unfairness is gradually tending (in spite of appearances) to the abolition of the duel in France. There are two signs that the custom is growing weaker. The opinion that duels are contrary to reason is more frequently expressed in conversation, especially by women, than it used to be, and the duellists themselves are generally satisfied with the degree of deference to custom which goes as far as the first wound, and do not vindictively thirst for each other's blood. The difficulty in abolishing the duel strikes an intelligent Frenchman in this way. "The duel," he thinks, "is evidently a most irrational institution; but when there is a quarrel between two high-spirited men I cannot see how it is to come to an end otherwise." Then he will say, "I know that the duel is obsolete in England, which is a happy thing for your country; but I cannot imagine how an English gentleman behaves when he is insulted." To this difficulty I usually reply that public opinion in his country condemns the insolent man for his bad manners, and puts itself on the side of any gentleman who conducts himself with simple dignity, so that the latter is free to treat his enemy with silent contempt.

Difficulty of abolishing the Duel.

Changes of custom in one of the two nations, which have had the effect of separating it still further from the other, may be traced in several minor habits that are now considered especially and characteristically English. I can remember the time when the middle classes of

Wines.

England hardly knew the taste of French wine. Port and sherry were the wines of the middle class. The upper classes, in those days, offered French red wines at dessert under the general name of "claret," without distinguishing between Bordeaux and Burgundy, and consequently without mentioning vineyards, unless the host happened to be, or pretended to be, a connoisseur. The taxes on French wines were afterwards reduced, and just before the reduction the kind of middle-class people who prided themselves on being especially national often declared that John Bull would never take to those light French wines, implying that he was a personage of more manly tastes, and writers in the press quoted a dignitary of the Anglican Church who had declared that "claret would be port, if it could," which is like saying that port is anxious to become brandy. These good middle-class people, who made it a part of John Bull's character to despise their French wines, seem to have been perfectly unaware that their ancestors, not less English than themselves, had for centuries been hearty appreciators of French wines, and that, in old times, casks of Bordeaux or Burgundy were to be found not only in the cellars of the rich, but in country hostelries. This may be a trifling matter, but to have the same taste in wines is not altogether unimportant as an aid to good-fellowship. A Frenchman looks upon an incapacity to appreciate the best wines—by which, of course, he always means the best French wines—as the sign of the outer barbarian. What he most likes in the Belgians is the just value they attach to the produce of "*les meilleurs crûs*" and their excellent, well-filled cellars.

French Wines in old England.

Another great change of custom in England, separat-

ing her from France, is of quite modern introduction. There was a time when both countries were total abstainers from tea-drinking, and, so far, exactly alike; now England is a great tea-drinking country and France is not. Here is a new subject on which they are not in sympathy. It may seem a trifle; but has the reader ever observed Englishwomen in France deprived of tea or supplied with the beverage in a weaker condition than they like? At such times they have a very low opinion of Gallic civilisation. Far-seeing Englishwomen who are accustomed to the continent take their own teapots with their private supplies, and make the indispensable decoction themselves. When drinking it they feel like Christians in a pagan land. Is that nothing? Does it not produce a perceptible sense of estrangement from the French? Tea-drinking has now become one of those immensely important customs, like smoking and coffee in the East, that have connected themselves with the amenities of human intercourse, and to brew your cup in the solitude of a foreign hotel is to feel yourself an alien. Yet how long is it since the English began to drink tea? They began tasting it experimentally, as a few Englishmen now smoke hashish, about the middle of the seventeenth century. Compared with ale and wine, it is a novelty. The greatest of Englishwomen, Queen Elizabeth, who was of English blood by father and mother, and thoroughly national, never drank a cup of tea in her life, and did her work energetically without it.

Tea.

Englishwomen in France.

Novelty of Tea-drinking in England.

The use of tea has produced a special meal in the English middle classes which is unknown in France as it was unknown in England two hundred years ago. The French way of living, under other names, bears a near

resemblance to old English habits. The *déjeuner à la fourchette* is the early dinner, the *dîner* is the supper. The French first breakfast is modern, when *café au lait* is taken, but great numbers of French people take soup or a glass of white wine with a crust of bread, and many take nothing at all. Breakfast and tea are the peculiarly English meals, and they are modern. The one great English innovation which the French have never been able to accept is that of eating salty and greasy food, such as fried bacon, and drinking hot and sweet tea or coffee at the same time.

The Peculiarly English Meals.

As an example of an old English fashion that is now looked upon as French, I may mention the way of treating the beard adopted by Napoleon III., and in imitation of him by many French soldiers and civilians. The moustache in combination with the *barbiche* was looked upon as a French fashion by the English, and very few contemporary Englishmen adopted it for that reason. They forgot that it was an old English fashion,—much older than the pair of whiskers with the shaven chin and upper lip which used to be looked upon as national in the highest degree. At the same time the English did not notice that the way of shaving the chin and upper lip which they believed to be so much the national mark of an Englishman was a rigorous contemporary French fashion for two classes, namely, magistrates (with barristers) and domestic servants. This is now somewhat relaxed, the tendency in both nations being towards complete liberty about the wearing of the beard.

The Beard and Moustache.

Shaving.

## CHAPTER II

### COMFORT

THERE seems to be a contradiction in the English character on this very important subject, for the English are at the same time one of the hardiest peoples in the world and quite the most self-indulgent up to that point which is defined by the national word "comfort." The English hardy yet Comfort-loving.

By "comfort" an Englishman understands perfect physical ease and something more. The state of perfect comfort is partly ideal. Tapestry on a wall is comfortable, yet we do not touch it, we do not wrap ourselves up in it. The mind is cognisant of its presence as a warm, soft tissue, and that is all. Carpets are a little nearer, physically, as we walk upon them; but nine-tenths of the comfort they give is also purely ideal, for it can matter very little to us that a whole floor should be clothed with a soft pile when we can get as much softness on bare boards by wearing slippers. Real and Ideal Comfort.

An Englishman's passion for comfort is also closely connected with his love of despatch, and his ingenuity in devising little conveniences that diminish friction. In this ingenuity he has no rival, but it sometimes defeats itself by making the conveniences themselves an embarrassment. Little Conveniences.

This is one of those matters which exhibit in a striking light the powerlessness of education, as the English of the comfortable classes have received their highest teaching from Greek philosophers and Christian apostles, two classes of teachers who, both by example and precept, inculcated the value of self-denial and simplicity of life.

Example given by Jesus.

We do not know very much of the life of Jesus, but the little that we do know is entirely in favour of the belief that it was almost destitute of physical comfort, and that he lived amongst a class of poor people to whom comfort was unknown. On one occasion, as we all remember, he expressly discouraged anxiety about eating and dress; and as for lodging, there is no evidence either that he had a dwelling of his own or that he ever intentionally sought the hospitality of the rich.

Socrates and Epictetus.

The lives of Socrates and Epictetus show an equal indifference to comfort; Socrates lived just as it happened, caring only for the life of thought; Epictetus, in a passage of splendid eloquence, rejoiced in his mental freedom, and demonstrated that it was compatible with the hardest and barest life.[1]

[1] The passage is very well known, but I may quote it for the convenience of some readers :—

"And how is it possible that a man who has nothing, who is naked, houseless, without a hearth, squalid, without a slave, without a city, can pass a life that flows easily? See, God has sent you a man to show you that it is possible. Look at me, who am without a city, without a house, without possessions, without a slave; I sleep on the ground; I have no wife, no children, no prætorium, but only the earth and heavens, and one poor cloak. And what do I want? Am I not without sorrow? Am I not without fear? Am I not free? When did any of you see me failing in the object of my desire? or ever falling into that which I would avoid? Did I ever blame God or man? Did I ever accuse any man? Did any of you ever see me with a sorrowful countenance? And how do I

The English answer to Epictetus would be that he lived in another age, that he was unmarried, and therefore had not to satisfy the claims of others, and finally, that he did nothing notable except philosophising. If a modern Englishman tried to live like Epictetus he would inflict a kind of social paralysis upon himself, he would deny himself his due share in English life. That is the great practical difficulty in the way of hard living and high thinking. It is well for the philosopher, but he cannot require the same austerity of his family and his guests. No individual Englishman is responsible for the national standard of comfort. It has grown as custom grows, and is now so firmly fixed that Wisdom herself has to submit to it.

Practical Difficulty of plain Living.

Individuals not Responsible.

There is even a marked difference of opinion between the present generation and that which has just passed away. I have known people, born at the close of the eighteenth century, who still retained an antique prejudice against self-indulgence. They still had the idea that there was something shameful in excessive comfort, that a certain discipline of hardness was necessary to manly dignity, and, in a minor degree, even to womanly. I have known an English gentleman of the old school, a vigorous and rich old man, who never would use a railway rug or a travelling cap; such things seemed to him concessions to the weakness of the age. At seventy, he would sit upright through a long railway journey, and he preferred second-class carriages, as

The old Prejudice against Self-indulgence.

meet with those whom ye are afraid of and admire? Do not I treat them like slaves? Who, when he sees me, does not think that he sees his king and master?"—*Epictetus*, Long's Translation, Book III. chap. xxii.

Old-fashioned Stoicism.

being less luxurious. His sister belonged to the same school; she never would lean back in a chair, and she disliked lounging habits of all kinds, as being associated with the idea of laziness. People of that kind maintained a strict discipline over themselves; the body had to obey the will. I have since found the same stoicism in full strength amongst the French peasantry. If any of their class betray too much care for their own comfort the rest laugh at them. They are hard with themselves, too, on principle, though there is certainly now a tendency to admit comforts which were formerly unknown.

Stoicism in the French Peasantry.

Modern Acceptance of what is Pleasant.

The idea that it is better not to be too comfortable is now, I believe, extinct in the richer classes in England. They have not become effeminate, but they think that it is well to accept all pleasant things in the right time and place. Why not be snug and warm in a railway carriage? Why not lounge in an easy-chair in the drawing-room? The effect of such indulgences has not been, hitherto, so softening as the austerity of a severer age apprehended. Extreme comfort, in an energetic race, produces healthy reactions. It leads directly to *ennui*, and *ennui* leads to a desire for a more active physical life. The age of the first-class carriage is also the age of the velocipede. The most comfortable classes in England are also the most addicted to field sports.

Comfort favourable to Health.

The truth is that the kinds of comfort most appreciated in England include several things which are very favourable to health, especially spacious habitations, pure air, plenty of water, thorough cleanliness, and good food. The increase of comfort has been accompanied by an increase of temperance. It has led to no serious evil, save one.

The one evil is the trying strain of expense to which an extremely high standard of living subjects all except the rich. It keeps all current expenses high, and therefore weighs pitilessly on those who must be refined and have not large independent means. A prudent young Englishman may well hesitate before he enters upon marriage with the prospect of a large house full of children and servants in which no shabbiness, bareness, or imperfection is to be tolerated. So far as pecuniary prudence is concerned, he would probably do better to fill a stable with fine horses. The Archbishop of Canterbury, whilst lamenting the early marriages of the improvident classes, has declared that the young men in the comfortable classes "are giving up the idea of marriage." This is the visible result. There is another consequence not so visible to the world in the harassed lives of unnumbered heads of families, the men whose days and nights are a combination of bodily comfort with mental toil and anxiety, the men to whom physical hardship would come, if they could only have it, as a counter-irritant and relief.

The Strain of Expense.

Comfort combined with Anxiety.

There has been little about the French in this chapter, and what there is to say may be expressed in few words. They have not naturally a genius for comfort like the English. Their natural way of living is hard in poverty and luxurious in riches, austerity and luxury equally belonging to the French nature. Of comfort they know what they have imperfectly learned from their English neighbours. At Versailles, in the days of Louis XIV., there was dazzling splendour, but comfort was utterly unknown. Modern French country houses (I mean those built for rich people in the second half of the nineteenth

Comfort little known in France.

French Habitations.

century) are planned as intelligently as the English, but the older châteaux were incredibly rough and wanting in the most elementary arrangements. Even yet, in the old provincial towns, French people put up with lodgings so awkwardly planned that an Englishman would not rent them. New town houses are better contrived, but still deficient in space.

Luxury less Indispensable than Comfort.

The question of expenditure is favourable to the French in this way, that they do without luxury more easily than the English do without comfort. The Frenchman in adversity falls back on the austere side of his nature; being both Sybarite and Spartan, he has the Spartan half of himself always ready for hard times. An impoverished French gentleman lodges in bare small rooms and lives principally on soup.[1] It is ten times harder for an Englishman to give up his spacious house with carpets on the floors.

Comfort and Luxury equally Costly.

The expenses of those who can afford to live largely are the same in both countries. Comfort, in the ideal English degree, is not less costly than luxury, though a careful analysis of details would prove that it is not precisely the same thing.

[1] A friend of mine knows an impoverished French Marquis, the head of an old family, who lives like a peasant in a bare old house that is never repaired. He and his sister consume one bottle of common wine between them each week, and they are served by one old faithful female domestic. Their ruin was caused by lavish uncalculating generosity, by what Herbert Spencer would call the culpable excess of altruism.

# CHAPTER III

## LUXURY

Want of a common Standard.

IT is most difficult to fix any common standard of luxury in two different nations. In a single nation the question whether an indulgence may be considered luxurious or not is settled by the national public opinion. There is no public opinion common to France and England.

Difficulty of Definition.

Even the definition of the word "luxury" is not so easy as it seems. In practice, people define it for themselves according to their own characters. An austere person would condemn as luxury what another would call "comfort;" a very luxurious person would be proud of luxury as a proof of taste and cultivation.

Littré's Definition.

Littré defined luxury (*luxe*) as "magnificence in dress, in the table, in furniture, an abundance of sumptuous things." He made a curious distinction between luxury and sumptuousness. In his opinion sumptuousness expressed the costliness of things, whilst luxury was the taste for what is sumptuous.

Lafaye's Definition.

Lafaye, in his valuable dictionary of French synonyms, carried out the same idea further in the region of morals. He said that luxury might belong to all conditions of life, whereas magnificence and sumptuousness can only belong to lofty positions. In Lafaye's opinion luxury is a fault or a vice which consists

in the want of simplicity, or in offending against simplicity in one's manner of living, or in his way of doing things, or of showing himself. Magnificence and splendour in great personages or in great cities are not vices, according to Lafaye, but the expression of generosity and grandeur.

Cheap Pleasures not considered Luxurious.

In private life the idea of luxury is connected more nearly with expense than with enjoyment. Very cheap things are not considered luxuries, though they may be delightful. A shepherd on a hillside has access to a cool fountain, and in a hot summer he delights in drinking the water and in resting under the shade of the trees. These are clearly enjoyments of sense, and exquisite enjoyments, but they are not luxuries for the shepherd. Iced water and green shade are luxuries in the heart of Paris. In a good fruit year peaches, however delicious, are not luxuries in central France, neither was wine in the happy times before the phylloxera. The former abundance of wine has led to the free employment of it in French cookery. This always strikes English people as luxurious.

Necessaries fixed by Custom.

Independently of cheapness and abundance, the exigencies of custom often determine that an indulgence is to be considered necessary, and not a luxury, when in reality it is quite superfluous. Thus, carpets are a necessity in England, in and above the middle classes, and a luxury in France.

Various Developments of Luxury.

Luxury develops itself in different directions, even with reference to the same enjoyment. The rich English and French both spend freely on the pleasures of the table, but in England there is more pride in the luxury of the service, and in France in that of the cookery.

One difference in the luxury of the two countries is

that the English are much more exotic in their indulgences than the French. Nearly all English luxuries come from abroad, whilst by far the greater part of French luxuries are procured at home. This may be connected with the broad, far-reaching, world-embracing character of the English intellect in its contrast with the narrower and more national French mind. Exotic Indulgences of the English.

A religious theorist has maintained that Divine Providence gives to every nation, in the products of its own soil, whatever is best for the inhabitants. If that is so, the French carry out the intentions of Providence much more completely than the English, but they are more favourably situated for conformity. The English, however, have so completely adopted some foreign luxuries as almost to believe them indigenous. In this way tea has become an English beverage, and it used to be more English to drink port than claret, though port was equally foreign and came from a greater distance.

Supposing an Englishman and a Frenchman to be in the same rank of life, and in a rank requiring servants, the Englishman will have twice or three times as many domestics as the Frenchman, and their service will be more accurate and minute than that in the French establishment. The English domestics will be more showy in liveries, and there will be altogether more visible grandeur about the service. In France domestics are kept because they are useful; in England, because they are ornamental. Domestic Servants.

The key to the luxuries of the two nations may be found in two words, *state* and *elegance*. The desire of the English heart is for *state*, implying size in the house and numbers in the retainers. French ambition contents State and Elegance.

itself with a few small rooms and few servants; but it seeks distinction in elegance. French elegance, like that of antiquity, begins with the person, especially in women.

Luxury in Dress.

In all kinds of feminine luxuries, particularly dress, France has kept the lead and gives the laws to England. The Church of Rome has settled that matter in her own authoritative and decided way by imposing simple and permanent uniforms on all women who belong to religious congregations; but her power, alas! is unequal to the far greater task of imposing a simple and rational dress upon all women whatsoever.

French Feminine Tendencies.

The true French female mind, when left to its own devices, loves neither permanence nor simplicity in costume; it desires the utmost elaboration combined with incessant change. It employs thousands of *couturières* in cutting valuable materials into shreds to be worn for a few days or hours. This modern changefulness has one good effect, it is certainly on the side of cleanliness. The French luxury of to-day is far more closely associated with cleanliness than that of preceding ages.

The Luxury of Renewal.

It is especially the luxury of *renewal*, first in dress, and also in furniture and habitation. The reconstruction of Paris has substituted clean streets, well lighted and well aired, for dirty and dark ones. The same process, in minor degrees, has been going on throughout France.

Luxury and Art.

I cannot examine in this place the question concerning the association between luxury and the Fine Arts. It is most difficult to state the exact truth on so complicated a subject in a few words. Some of the French are artistic, and many of them are luxurious, so that art and luxury may be seen together in France; but they are not inseparably connected, and for my part I regret the ac-

cidental association. Nothing, in my opinion, can be nobler than the combination of artistic grandeur in the things which affect the mind with austere simplicity in those that touch the body. In the magnificent old French cathedrals you have the most sublime and the most costly architecture above you and around you, with a rush-bottomed chair to sit upon, like the chairs in the humblest cottage. In many an art gallery you have priceless treasures on the walls; but neither curtains for the windows nor carpets for the floor. The most precious engravings are often framed with a beading of plain oak. The masterpieces of sculpture keep their dignity best in rooms that are simple to severity. It is evident, therefore, that the fine arts are absolutely independent of luxury; but, on the other hand, it is also true that from the richness of the materials employed in some of the fine arts a luxurious people may be tempted to turn them to a lower use. Painting may be made luxurious by the charm of colour, and also by sensuous or sensual suggestions in the work itself. Besides these attractions, the modern spirit of luxury likes a picture as an excuse for decorating a room with a massive and glittering gilt frame.[1] The marble of a statue is also an agreeable thing to look upon, because it is smooth to the touch, and so soon as we descend to the minor arts we find great numbers of precious and pleasant materials which may be used as hangings or wrought into exquisite furniture. The love of beautiful objects, comprised in French under the convenient generic term *bibelot*, is

Art and Austerity.

Beautiful Materials.

The *Bibelot*.

[1] It is very significant that as the spirit of luxury has increased in France, the width and costliness of picture-frames have increased along with it.

strongly characteristic of the present stage of ultra-civilisation. The true sign of it is the search for the exquisite in all things. To live on dainties and be always surrounded with softness, to have plenty of amusing and expensive toys, is the end of the luxurious modern French development of the human faculties. How familiar, how commonplace, this life of luxury has become, and how many far higher and more estimable things are sacrificed to it! It is worse even than English comfort; because it takes a false appearance of superior refinement. Only after the first novelty has passed away do we discover that it is essentially vulgar and dull, and truly the vanity of vanities.

Commonplace Character of French Luxury.

# CHAPTER IV

## MANNERS

Codes of manners have a very restricted rule. They are national, and in the nation each class has its own code. If, therefore, one nation judges another by its own standard, it is evident that abstract justice must be impossible; yet it is difficult to find any other criterion. National and Class Codes.

The reader may try to discover some criterion outside of national peculiarities, but he will certainly meet with this difficulty, that although people of different nations might be induced to agree about some virtue that manners ought to have, they are not likely to agree about its practical application and expression.

For example, let us take the virtue of courtesy. Are people to be courteous or discourteous? We should find an almost universal agreement on the general principle that courtesy is a part of good manners; but we should disagree on the application of it. As a rule, the Frenchman would be likely to think the Englishman's courtesy too restricted and reserved. Much of it, and that the best, would even escape his notice, whilst the Englishman would consider French politeness overdone. Courtesy.

The great difficulty in judging such a question as this is that we require to have been long accustomed to Difficulty of interpreting Manners.

manners of a peculiar kind before we can estimate them at their precise significance. If they are new to us we do not understand them, we are not able to read the thoughts and intentions which express themselves in forms as in a sort of language.

Epistolary Forms.

The words used in epistolary forms are the most familiar example of the *second* meaning, the only true meaning that there is in forms of any kind. If a superior in rank subscribes himself my obedient servant, I know that his meaning is as remote as possible from the dictionary sense of the words. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to suppose that the words, as he uses them, are meaningless. Such a form, in English, is intended to convey the idea of distance without contempt. It is as much as to say, in familiar English, "I don't know you, and don't care to know you; but I have no desire to be rude to you." The form *Dear Sir*, in English, has nothing to do with affection. It means, "I know very little of you; but wish to avoid the coldness of *Sir* by itself." *My dear Sir* means something of this kind, "I remember meeting you in society."

No French Equivalents for English Forms.

A literal translation of these forms into French would entirely fail to convey their significance. You must be on the most intimate terms with a Frenchman before he will venture to address you as *Cher Monsieur*. There is absolutely no form of address in French that translates the meanings of *Dear Sir* and *My dear Sir*. They can only be translated by *Monsieur*, which fails to differentiate them from *Sir*.

Severity of French Forms.

The French forms used in writing to ladies are still more severe. "How would you begin a letter to Madame

L——?" I asked a French gentleman who is a model of accuracy in etiquette:—

"Well, in the first place, I should never presume to write to Madame L—— at all."

"But if circumstances made it imperative that you should write to her?"

"In that case I should address her as *Madame*, simply, and at the close of the letter beg her to accept *mes hommages respectueux*."

Perhaps the reader imagines that the lady was a distant acquaintance; no, she was the wife of a most intimate friend, and the two families met very frequently. In this case the point of interest is that the lady would have been addressed as a stranger from a want of flexibility in the French forms.

There is a Frenchman who receives me with the utmost kindness and cordiality whenever I visit his neighbourhood. We correspond occasionally, and his letters begin "*Monsieur*" just as if he had never seen me, ending with the expression of his "*sentiments respectueux*."

A *very* intimate friend in France will begin a letter with *Mon cher Ami*. I have only known three Frenchmen who used that form of address to myself. Two or three others would begin *Cher Monsieur et Ami*, mingling the formal with the affectionate. Englishmen hardly ever write *My dear Friend;* that is now an American form.

French Ceremony.

The French tendency to be ceremonious is not confined to letter-writing. It comes upon French people in personal intercourse in a curiously occasional way. I remember a physician, now dead, who had excellent French manners of the old school. He talked with

great ease and without the least affectation, but on all those little occasions when a Frenchman feels bound to be ceremonious he was so in the supreme degree. After talking quite easily and intimately with some lady whom he had known for many years, he would rise to take leave with graceful old-fashioned attitudes and phrases, as if she were far his superior in rank and he had spoken to her for the first time.

Old-fashioned French Manners.

It has happened to me to know rather intimately six or eight old French gentlemen who retained the manners which had come down from the eighteenth century. They evidently took a pleasure, perhaps also some pride, in being able to go through forms of politeness gracefully, and without error. An Englishman would find it difficult to do that in equal perfection, his northern nature would not take quite so fine a polish. Even amongst French people, as manners become more democratic, these old forms are continually reduced. They are no longer considered indispensable, and the younger men, who have not continually practised them, are not sufficiently skilful actors to play ceremonious parts with ease.[1]

Reduction of old Forms.

It is very difficult for a non-ceremonious people to understand the precise value of old ceremonial forms. Even the poor and meagre survivals of them seem devoid of meaning to those who do not practise them at all, yet assuredly they had a meaning which was not exactly that of the words employed. After much reflection and much studying of the matter, as a barbarian, from the outside, I have come to the conclusion that a great repertory of

[1] This reminds me of a French proverb often quoted by an old naval officer whom I knew. *Rien n'est bien fait qui n'est pas fait habituellement.*

formal phrases would be valued as a means of decently concealing the emptiness of genteel intercourse. To us they are embarrassing because we have not learned our lesson well, but the French upper classes of the eighteenth century knew them all by heart, and could repeat them without thinking. When people take any serious interest in a subject worth talking about, polite phrases are forgotten, the only instance to the contrary that I remember being the pretty one of a French professor lecturing in the royal presence, when he announced that two gases would "have the honour of combining before His Majesty." Convenience of Formal Phrases.

The real embarrassments of social intercourse are awkward silence, stiffness, ignorance of conventional usages. As for the degree of affectation or falsity that there may be in the expression of so many amiable or deferential sentiments that one does not exactly feel, everybody knows that they have only a secondary signification. Embarrassments of Social Intercourse.

In any attempt to judge of manners, especially in a foreign nation, we are liable to two mistakes. We are likely to think that a degree of polish inferior to our own is rudeness, whilst the refinement that surpasses ours is affectation, we ourselves having exactly that perfection of good breeding which is neither one nor the other. An Englishman is particularly liable to think in this way, because the present English ideal of good manners is a studied simplicity. We come to think that a simple manner is unaffected, whilst high polish must have been learned from the etiquette-book. However, in a perfectly bred French gentleman, a somewhat ceremonious manner with a vigilant politeness is so habitual as to be second Our Opinion about Foreign Manners. English Simplicity.

nature. It remains constantly the same; if it were only assumed, it would be involuntarily forgotten in privacy or in moments of fatigue or vexation.

The history of the relation between English and French manners may be conveniently divided into three periods.

Manners in the Eighteenth Century.

In the eighteenth century manners were ceremonious in both countries. English people used "Sir" and "Madam," they bowed and were punctilious; they went through complicated little performances of graceful attitudes and expressions. In the first half of the nineteenth century the English laid these old fashions aside and became simple in their manners. The French kept to the ancient ways, and so there was a great contrast. In the second half of the nineteenth century the French tendency is towards English simplicity, so that the two nations may ultimately be as near each other in simplicity as they were once in ceremony.

The French retain old Fashions.

Politeness co-existing with Rudeness.

Another point of resemblance may deserve notice. When the English were very ceremonious and polite the ordinary manners of the nation were rude, with occasional explosions of coarse anger between gentlemen.[1] So the French have been, and still are, at once a very polite and a very rude nation. Their politeness and their rudeness are now decreasing together, which leads to the conclusion that ceremonious politeness is a defence against surround-

[1] I am myself old enough to remember how, when I was a boy, two gentlemen of good family quarrelled over their port wine after dinner, and one of them shouted to the other, "I'll pull your nose, sir, I'll pull your nose!" Some highly polished young reviewer of the present day will say that I had fallen into low company, but those gentlemen of a past time were quite as good as he is likely to be with all his polish, and it is probable that the aristocratic spirit was far more genuine in them than it is in anybody now.

ing barbarism, and therefore the mark of an imperfect state of general civilisation. There may come, in the future, in both countries, a uniform mediocrity, when everybody will have tolerable manners, when a sort of informal serviceableness will be the universal rule, and all graces, delicacies, and refinements will be forgotten.

A Future of Mediocrity

The reader may remember a passage in John Mill's autobiography, where he makes a contrast between English and French manners in connection with his early residence in France at Sir Samuel Bentham's house near Montpellier. "I even then felt," he says, "though without stating it clearly to myself, the contrast between the frank sociability and amiability of French personal intercourse, and the English mode of existence, in which everybody acts as if everybody else (with few or no exceptions) was either an enemy or a bore. In France, it is true, the bad as well as the good points, both of individual and of national character, come more to the surface, and break out more fearlessly in ordinary intercourse, than in England; but the general habit of the people is to show, as well as to expect, friendly feeling in every one towards every other, wherever there is not some positive cause for the opposite. In England it is only of the best bred people, in the upper or middle ranks, that anything like this can be said."

Mill on French and English Intercourse.

This judgment is at the same time bold and true. The English do not care about any reputation for politeness, but do greatly care about their dignity, and are extremely afraid of compromising it by being *incautiously* amiable. When, however, an Englishman knows you, and has come to the conclusion that he can be amiable with

English Dignity.

safety, that you are not the pushing person he dreads and detests, then his undemonstrative politeness will go much further than that of the Frenchman. You may know Frenchmen for twenty years without getting beyond that first stage of Gallic sociability that gives such a charm to the beginning of intercourse with them. One cause of this difference is that the English are an extremely hospitable people, and the French just the reverse. Acquaintance with French people is therefore very frequently limited to short formal calls, in which everybody acts a part in repeating polite commonplaces, leaving any mutual knowledge of minds and hearts exactly where it was before.

English Hospitality

Here is another point of contrast that may be worth mentioning. French gentlemen in their intercourse with the middle classes often use an *excessive* politeness as a defence against intimacy, and this is perfectly understood. English habits would make excessive politeness unnatural, so the Englishman defends himself by a chilling reserve. The purpose is the same in both cases.

Excessive Politeness as Defence.

Manners always represent an ideal of some kind. The English way of behaviour seems to stand for dignity, the French for grace. Manners in both countries are more the representation of self in outward forms than any evidence of real consideration for the person to whom they are addressed. The Englishman wishes to convey the idea that he himself has dignity, that he is a gentleman; the Frenchman is anxious to show that he is a witty and accomplished man of the world. In England dignity is maintained by coldness, by repose, by the absence of effort, including low-toned, indolent enunciation; in France the notion of polish requires, above all

The Personal Intention in Manners.

Dignity and Polish.

things, brilliance. The English criticism on a Frenchman's manners is that he lays himself out too much for admiration, and seems to beg for sympathy too much. French criticism on an Englishman's manners is simply that he is destitute of manners. It is almost idle to compare two styles of behaviour that are founded on different principles. Without pretending to pronounce upon the merits of either, I should say that the virtues of English behaviour are chiefly of a negative kind, and those of French behaviour positive. An Englishman is pleasant because he is *not* noisy, *not* troublesome, *not* obtrusive, *not* contradictory, and because he has the tact to avoid conversational pitfalls and precipices. The Frenchman is agreeable because he *is* lively, *is* amusing, *is* amiable, *is* successful in the battle against dulness, and will take trouble to make conversation interesting.

Virtues of English Behaviour Negative.

Those of French Behaviour Positive.

Bad manners in England are simply boorish; in France they are noisy, insolent, and full of contradiction. A thoroughly vulgar Frenchman is overbearing and menacing in his tone, he is loud and positive, and if you attempt to speak he will interrupt you. In his presence one has no resource but silence. Even his own more civilised countrymen consider him unendurable.

Bad Manners in France and England.

Manners change greatly with localities in Great Britain and France, and it is remarkable that they are often worst in the most industrious and advanced parts of the country. In the Highlands of Scotland, where industrial civilisation is almost unknown, popular manners are excellent; in some parts of the Lowlands they are rude, repellent, and unsympathetic. The best popular English manners are to be found in certain rural districts, the worst in thriving and energetic Lancashire. Too much energy seems un-

Manners and Locality.

Industrialism.

favourable to the best behaviour, which grows to perfection amongst idlers, or in agricultural and pastoral communities, where folks work in a leisurely fashion and have many spare moments on their hands.

Non-national Exceptions.

In the course of this chapter I have avoided exceptions for the sake of clearness, which makes it necessary to add that there are people in both nations whose manners are not national. It is not an English characteristic to be a lively and brilliant *causeur*, yet there are Englishmen who have that quality and that art. The manners of George Henry Lewes were more French than English; he had the openness and ease of a Frenchman, his frank welcome, his gay cordiality, his abundant flow of words, his natural delight in conversation, his unhesitating self-confidence. There is also a small class of Frenchmen who have those qualities in manners which are believed to be exclusively English. They are quiet and reserved, they listen well, they never interrupt, they do not attempt to shine. When they talk, they talk deliberately, and in the purest language, never condescending to use the slang which is now rapidly corrupting the French tongue, and they employ terms accurately without French exaggeration. They are polite, but with an intelligent moderation, and they make no show of politeness.

G. H. Lewes.

These are exceptions on the favourable side. There are also innumerable exceptions which are nothing but a variety of individual failures to approach the national ideal. It is useless to attempt the description of these. All comic and satirical literature takes them for its own.

# CHAPTER V

## DECORUM

THE French laugh at the English for their "*décorum anglais*," as if the English were alone in having a strict rule about what is becoming. The French themselves are equally strict, but in other ways, nor is this strictness confined to the upper classes, for the French peasantry have it in a marked degree.[1] *Le Décorum anglais.*

The maintenance of decorum as a principle and a rule is compatible with astonishing oversights and omissions which strike a foreigner so forcibly that he thinks there is no decorum at all. In these cases, the foreigner's mistake is usually to be unaware of some powerful conventionalism by which decorum is theoretically maintained whilst it is practically violated. Travellers in Japan are astonished by the old Japanese system of bathing. One asks for a bath in a Japanese inn, and it is prepared, perhaps, in the common room or the kitchen, in the midst of the usual movement of men and women. Here, if anywhere, is Oversights in Decorum. Japanese Bathing.

[1] For example, in the French neighbourhood best known to me it is contrary to peasant decorum for a farmer and his wife to walk to church together. He must go first with his male companions, and she must follow with the women. It is also contrary to decorum for a man to be seen giving his arm to his wife, under any circumstances.

surely a gross violation of decorum. No; it appears that by a convenient fiction a bather is not seen, and the same fiction allows the Japanese themselves to bathe together without any separation of sexes. When I was a boy there existed a certain conventionalism of the same kind in England. In those days bathing-dresses were only used by women, men always bathed in a state of complete nudity, and they were frequently close to the sea-shore whilst ladies were walking about and looking on. A French author gave, at that time or a little later, an account of his embarrassment when bathing in a lonely place on the shores of England. He had left his clothes on the beach, when some ladies came and pitched their camp-stools on the spot. He splashed to attract their attention, but they sat on, impassible. At length he quitted the water and made a bold advance, but with no effect. Finally he marched past, like a regiment at a review, and the ladies kept their places. Nothing, in this little adventure, violates the English decorum of former days. The Frenchman could not have presented himself, like Adam, in a garden, but on the sea-beach *il n'y avait rien à dire*. The ladies bravely acted on the fiction that a *sea*-bather is invisible, and they consistently carried out that fiction to the end. The Frenchman knew not that he had the ring of Gyges, the talisman of invisibility.

English Bathing in former Days.

A French Bather in England.

The French have a conventionalism about bathing-dresses which does not exist in England to the same degree. French decorum permits men and women to bathe together freely on condition that they have a costume. At the seaside a "full costume" is required, but that is not much, and the feminine form of it is very pretty—rather too pretty, in fact, as it is too obviously

French Bathing.

intended to attract eyes rather than turn them away. Besides being pretty, the feminine bathing-dresses are extremely varied, leaving free play to the inventive fancy. A puritan legislator would feel tempted to replace those charming costumes by the plain old English bathing-gown, which was doubly useful, as it concealed both ugliness and beauty with equal impartiality.

The Frenchman in his *Caleçon.*

French decorum always requires a man to bathe at least with the minimum of dress. Attired in his *caleçon de bain* a Frenchman seems to think that it covers the whole body, and he does not lose his self-possession in any society, but will exhibit his short and muscular person to all observers.

Cantabridgian Actors.

It may be noted as a curiosity of modern English decorum, that when the young men at Cambridge played the *Birds* of Aristophanes, their legs and feet were bare in the Greek fashion. This would certainly not have been done or tolerated in contemporary France, though the imitation of antiquity went equally far under the first Empire, for example, in the costume of Madame Tallien and her imitators.

The Decorum of Classes.

Every class has its own decorum. Amongst artists' models there is a kind of professional dignity which makes it disagreeable for the better class of them to be seen by any one who is not an artist. A French girl who was posing in an *atelier* before thirty students screamed and wrapped herself in a sheet because an unprofessional man had entered the room. In this case there was some reason in the model's conception of decorum. She was there for her own hard work, but not to be stared at by strangers.

There is a very important practical question of decorum

Natural Necessities.

with regard to natural necessities. Although no human being can escape from that law, and although by mere healthy living we all openly confess that we have conformed to it, a foolish decorum refuses to recognise it.

Foolish Decorum.

In England this foolish decorum has long been tyrannically prevalent, but railways have done much to break it down by accustoming travellers of both sexes to acknowledge without shame the existence of the need, and it has now become customary in England to provide for it, both at railway stations and in exhibitions. This is a triumph of reason which acknowledges the whole of human nature over a conventionalism which would set up a false and impossible ideal. There still remains the inconsistency by which a need provided for by all railway companies and organisers of exhibitions is ignored in the streets of the great English towns. This way of treating the matter is, in truth, directly contrary to its own purpose of an ideally decorous life, as these lower wants occupy a very small space in a man's time and thought when they can be immediately satisfied, whereas they become intrusive and importunate when the satisfaction is denied. In obedience to this unreasonable decorum the English still inflict upon themselves very frequent inconvenience, occasionally amounting to torture, and in some cases to serious physical injury.[1]

An English Inconsistency.

French Simplicity

The French have always been more simple and natural in regard to these matters; but they may be justly blamed for cynicism in the sound original meaning of the word. They are now beginning to imitate the English by establishing a proper degree of privacy. This is one of those

[1] I have heard of two cases that ended fatally, simply in consequence of obedience to English decorum.

numerous cases in which the two countries may improve each other's customs.

English Decorum chooses French Words.

English decorum has a weakness in its choice of French words to express what it will not venture to say in English, as if the French words were not either equally plain for anybody who knew the language, or useless for one who did not. There is a good old English word for a woman's shirt, the English for it is "shift," which gives the cleanly idea of a thing that is to be often changed. This word has been abandoned from an unpatriotic modesty or prudery, and replaced by the French word "chemise," as if "chemise" were more decorous. In the same way "nude" and "nudity" (French words) are somehow believed to be much more chaste than "naked" and "nakedness," and "enceinte" purer than "with child." This fancy for French terms is the more remarkable that the English translation of the Bible, which is considered a model of pure and dignified language, does not give the slightest encouragement to it, but says everything in the plainest native way.

Plain Language of the Bible.

Purification of Talk.

Liberty of language in conversation is very much a matter of dates. In Queen Anne's time people said things at English tables that would be thought monstrous under Queen Victoria. In fact, at the present time, the purification of talk has gone so far in England that people will neither utter nor listen to what they constantly read in the newspapers which lie about in their own rooms. In France there still remains a certain old-fashioned tolerance, an inheritance from the eighteenth century; but with this reserve or proviso, that every infraction of strict decorum must be witty. On that condition it is likely to be pardoned. The most astounding instance I

The Mayor of Eu.

ever heard of was the song of the Mayor of Eu. That functionary was invited to the Château of Eu, in the days of Louis Philippe, so he made or learned a song about his mayoralty, and sang it to the royal family at dessert according to the old-fashioned French usage. The composition had two senses, one perfectly innocent and on the surface, the other not immoral but prodigiously indecorous. The royal family understood, laughed, and forgave. Such a thing might have been done in England at the court of Queen Elizabeth. A President of the French Chamber, being annoyed by one of the members, saw an opportunity for a witticism like those of the audacious mayor. It was a pun on the member's name, and all parties in the House received it with unanimous appreciation.

Recent Character of present English Decorum.

To estimate these breaches of decorum justly, we must remember how extremely recent the present English decorum is. It belongs almost exclusively to the present century, and is the mark of maturity in the public mind. In the youth of nations, as in that of individuals, grossness of a certain kind seems amusing. It makes schoolboys laugh, even when it is quite devoid of wit; and I have said that in contemporary French society it is tolerated only on condition of being witty. English society is older and graver, older by a hundred years, just as it is more experienced in politics and religion, having got through its great political and religious crises earlier.

A sign of Maturity

External Strictness of Immoral Societies.

Here, as in other things, there are inequalities that quite put out the inexperienced observer. He is likely to imagine that the French have no decorum because he believes them to be immoral. He forgets that decorum is often of itself the morality of immoral societies, as going

to church is the religion of the worldly. Venetian society, in Byron's time, was extremely strict, not as to the realities of conduct, but in regard to certain outward appearances. French society, in the present day, is more strict in some respects than either English or Scotch. The behaviour of English girls, and still more that of American girls, is not positively wrong or immoral in French opinion, but it is indecorous. Even married ladies, in French country towns, have to be extremely careful not to incur the censure of public opinion, and in some towns they live in a kind of half-oriental retirement that English readers could not realise or believe. Before marriage anything more intimate than respectful politeness on the part of the gentleman, and reserve on that of the lady, is looked upon as a sign of ill breeding. After the marriage the husband's masculine friends may remain for twenty years very distant acquaintances of his wife. It is certain that, in general, French decorum keeps up a much stronger barrier between the sexes than English decorum does.

French Reserve.

The French, too, are stricter observers of decorum in regard to the dead. They are very careful about funerals, and about subsequent references to the dead, either in ceremonies, such as visits to the tomb and services for the repose of the soul, or in conversation. The obligations felt by the living in consequence of a death are more stringent and more widely spread in France than in England. A French lady who knew her countrymen well enumerated a few things which were essential to any one who lived amongst them; and one of the chief of these was attendance at funerals, just as in Scotland one would recommend the observance of the Sabbath.

French Decorum in regard to the Dead.

Decorum and Democracy.

The principle of decorum being the study of external appearances, it is not likely to be much observed by an excited and turbulent democracy. Still, a kind of artistic instinct desires decorum, and re-establishes it even after the most violent commotions. It is interesting to see how regularly and inevitably it has been re-established in France, so soon as a new form of government has been settled. M. Mollard, the Introducer of Ambassadors, was the Grand Master of Decorum for the Élysée, and had as much to occupy him as a Lord Chamberlain.

Decorum in Literature.

Decorum in literature and the fine arts is quite distinct from morality. A book may be irreproachably decorous, yet very immoral at the same time, and this is a combination that many readers seem to approve of. I could hardly mention a better instance of it than the famous little novel *Manon Lescaut*, by the Abbé Prévost, a French classic made still more famous in recent times by the opera which Massenet founded upon it. That is one of the most immoral books ever written; the situations are doubly and triply immoral; there is no sense of conduct in the leading personages, who are vicious and unprincipled in all their dealings; yet, at the same time, the author is much more decorous (according to modern ideas) than either Swift or Sterne. Critics who condemn modern novels as being "filthy," because the sexual arrangements in them are lawless, are inexact in the application of their censure. In the French literature of the present day the combination of decorum with immorality is very common; and decorum is so far from acting as an effective restraint upon immorality that under certain circumstances it positively favours it. Immoral writers know how to conciliate the slaves of

*Manon Lescaut.*

Modern French Literature.

decorum, and win not only their tolerance, but even their protection.

English Decency.

The English deserve great respect for the general decency of their modern literature, and certainly they get this respect even from the French themselves. But there are some curious anomalies in connection with this subject. English decorum permits the publication of details in the reports of divorce cases which French decorum absolutely forbids. The French tolerate certain matters provided that they be fictitious, the English on condition that they be real. The French admit disgusting art, the English disgusting nature. The French novelist may be more attractive, but the English newspaper reporter is a thousand times more impressive, having all the force of reality on his side. The fictitious adulteress is but a phantom in comparison with the living beauty who is seen and heard in a court of justice; and what fall of an imaginary hero ever impressed us like that of the gifted and ambitious politician who barred his own path to the premiership of England?

Divorce Reports in France and England.

English Indulgence towards indecorous old Books.

It strikes one, too, as rather surprising that the English, whose sense of decorum is so easily offended by modern authors of books, should still be so indulgent to those who wrote before modern decorum was invented. Young maids and old maids read Shakespeare in unexpurgated editions; but what is still more surprising is that many English people should go out of their way to express admiration for Rabelais. Have they read him? Can they understand his old French? If they can, and read him still, they need not be afraid of Zola.

Being in the house of an English clergyman, I found on the shelves of his library a copy of Byron's works in

the one-volume edition. That edition includes *Don Juan*, but my clerical friend had excluded the poem, I found, by cutting every leaf of it out. I do not question his right to spoil a volume he had paid for, but what struck me as inconsistent was the reverent preservation, on the same shelves, of a complete Shakespeare in large print. Byron is incomparably the more decorous poet of the two, but he is not protected, as Shakespeare is, by a date. Shakespeare wrote before the invention of decorum, and therefore could not offend against that which did not exist. Byron wrote after its invention, and offended against it consciously and deliberately. The indecency of old authors is not only pardoned in a decorous age, but valued as a release from contemporary strictness. Some of them, particularly in France, are now reprinted in luxurious editions *for* their indecency, which is highly appreciated now.

In spite of these and other inconsistencies, and notwithstanding the recent efforts of some English poets to recover a certain licence, it is certain that decorum is better observed in English literature than in French. One of the best signs of matured health in the English mind is its capacity for wit and humour without the coarse and facile expedient of indecorous allusion. The far superior decency of the English comic papers is combined with superior wit. The inanity of the French illustrations of the *Demi-monde* is equalled only by their excessive sameness. Men like Leech and Charles Keene have attained far more variety by studying respectable Englishwomen, who are occupied in a thousand ways, than Grévin could ever get out of the monotonous lives of his French *lorettes*. Nor is the reason for this difficult

English and French Comic Papers.

to discover. The life of vice is essentially dull, because the women are usually uneducated; and the men themselves become half idiotic, not only through excesses of all kinds, but in consequence of their frivolous waste of time.

The Naked Figure in Art.

In serious art the naked figure is more frequently presented in France than in England, and it is quite customary in England to look upon it as a French evil. I need hardly remind the reader that the country where the naked figure was first studied with attention was not France, but Greece, and that every nation where art has been a serious pursuit has sedulously revived that study. It is trying to the patience to attempt any reasoning with people who can see nothing but lasciviousness in the higher forms of art. It seems to me natural that men who have devoted years to the study of the human form should desire to express their knowledge in works more important than the studies they make for their private use, in works that may have some possible chance of immortality. The study itself can never be repressed. The clothed figures in pictures that the Philistine does not object to can only be drawn well by a student of the nude. Many artists, like the President of the Royal Academy, first take the praiseworthy trouble to draw every figure naked, even when it is draped afterwards. Why the objection should be so specially raised against French art I do not know, unless it be for the same reason which makes people cry aloud against French immorality and pass in charitable silence Italian and Austrian immorality. As a matter of fact, with a few exceptions, the French school of sculpture is as dignified as it is learned.

Study of the Figure.

Sir F. Leighton.

French Sculpture.

French Painting.

French painting is less dignified because nearer to ordinary nature, but the fault to be found with it is chiefly that the nude figures of the present day are insufficiently idealised; it is not indecency as such, but a low prosaic realism that has established itself in this art; you do not meet with a nymph or a dryad, but with a portrait of some model. I remember hearing a French artist (himself an exhibitor of severely ideal nude figures) maintain that the nude by itself was decent, and so was clothing, but he abominated the two in the same picture. There have been plenty of examples of this unnatural union in past times, and in pictures which are now the pride of the great galleries; however, the most important contemporary instance is not a French picture but an Austrian, the *Entry of Charles the Fifth into Antwerp*, by Hans Makart.

Realism.

# PART VII

# SOCIETY

# CHAPTER I

## CASTE

ENGLAND and France are alike in this, that caste is not yet abolished in either country, and they also resemble each other in passing through a state of false caste which appears to be intermediary between true caste and a future casteless condition of society. The two nations differ, however, in the kinds of false caste through which they are passing, and the purpose of the present chapter will be to examine the nature of the difference. Caste not abolished.

True caste is a social condition existing by authority and general consent, in which every human being has, by birth, his fixed place in the social organism, and receives exactly the degree of respect or contempt which is accorded to the place independently of his personal efforts or qualities. True Caste.

The state of false caste is a condition of things in which there is still a sort of social hierarchy, but the positions in it are neither fixed nor well defended, so that impostors may get possession of them and enjoy the consideration which formerly belonged only to those who were born in the caste. This is the present condition of England and France, in different ways and in different degrees. It is better than true caste in giving False Caste.

openings to ability, but worse in offering temptations and prizes to imposture.

The caste spirit is not by any means confined to an aristocracy. The social state of true caste includes all classes of society, fixing the relative inferiorities of the humble as strictly as the superiorities of the great. It will be convenient, however, to consider the aristocratic spirit first and by itself. Are there still genuine aristocracies in England and France?

The Aristocratic Spirit.

I have observed elsewhere that England has been able to pass through a highly convenient intermediate stage, that of an aristocratic republic, preserving monarchical appearances, and that France has not been able to do this, not having the kind and quality of aristocracy that was necessary for the work. I said this, but I did not say (what some Englishmen believe) that France has no real aristocracy at all.

On the contrary, I agree with Littré in the belief that the real aristocratic spirit still lives vigorously in France, but only in the aristocracy itself; and I should say that the great difference between England and France in this respect is that *what there is* of the aristocratic spirit in England is shared by classes outside of the aristocracy, whereas in France very few people have the aristocratic sentiment unless it has been implanted in them by the traditions of an aristocratic house, and cultivated by a training apart from the ordinary training of Frenchmen.

Aristocratic Spirit in France.

Again, it does not appear that the aristocratic spirit in England, though widely diffused, is of a pure or elevated kind. Perhaps it may be for this very reason, perhaps it is just because it is not pure or elevated, that it is so general and so commonly understood.

English Aristocratic Spirit.

The want of purity and elevation in the present English ideal of aristocracy is evident from the undeniable fact that title is now little more than a supreme sanction given to the popular adoration of wealth. From the idea that it is inconvenient for a peer of England to be poor, a further advance has been made to the idea that a very rich man has a sort of claim to a title; and when peerages are bestowed on obscure men as a reward for having enriched themselves, the proceeding is thought so natural as to excite no comment, except, perhaps, from Mr. Labouchere. When, on the other hand, a distinguished man, not exceptionally rich, is made the recipient of a peerage, his promotion is a surprise to the public, unless it can be explained as a reward for political services to the party that happens to be in power. The Tennyson peerage is a curious example of this. Some friends of the Poet Laureate thought it rather a degradation for a man of genius to accept the prize of a lower ambition than that which they had believed to be his, whilst his enemies made quotations from *Maud*, applicable to new titles and new mansions. If Tennyson had been a successful brewer or banker, nobody would have made a remark; his peerage would not have been considered either above him or below him, but simply the natural English consecration of new riches.

Title the Sanction of Wealth.

The Tennyson Peerage.

Forty years before the elevation of Tennyson to the English peerage, his contemporary, Victor Hugo, was made a peer of France. It is probable that not a single Frenchman perceived anything incongruous in that promotion, or wondered whether the new peer had money enough to support his dignity.

Victor Hugo's Peerage.

The reader may call to mind a few strong words of

Matthew Arnold on Aristocracy.

Matthew Arnold about the present condition of aristocracy in England: "Aristocracy now sets up in our country a false ideal, which materialises our upper class, vulgarises our middle class, brutalises our lower class. It misleads the young, makes the worldly more worldly, the limited more limited, the stationary more stationary."

These evils are due to the transformation of the English aristocracy into a plutocracy that is not, as in America, a plainly avowed plutocracy, but disguises itself in aristocratic costumes.

Distinction of a true Aristocracy.

The distinction of a true aristocracy is that it is *not* a plutocracy, but a noble caste, including poor members as well as rich, and having certain ideals which, however foreign they may be to the spirit of the present age, did certainly, in their own time, tend to lift men and women above vulgarity. The most ennobling of those ideals

Money not the highest Object.

was the notion that money was not the highest object of pursuit. The poor gentleman could be contented with ill-paid service in the army or the Church, because he did not serve for money; and it was believed within the caste, rightly or wrongly, that to labour for pecuniary rewards as the main object had a degrading effect upon

The Army.

the mind. The army was a chosen profession, because it was the school of courage, obedience, and self-sacrifice;

The Church.

the Church, because it was the school of piety and morality, as well as the home of learning. I know that I am describing a narrow ideal, but most ideals that have had any power in the world have been narrow, and I am anxious to show how in the old aristocratic prejudices there were elements of real nobleness, which may have given them dignity and vitality. Those prejudices were hostile to some things that we now value. They were

hostile, for example, to the pursuit of the fine arts, but it was from an apprehension, which I now see to have been only too well founded, that in struggling for the acquirement of brilliant manual skill, the student might spend his efforts on a low object. Those prejudices looked doubtfully upon commerce; it was thought that a gentleman did better not to go into trade; but the reason was because a heavy business ties a man down so much, and leaves him so little leisure for study or society, so little liberty for travel, that it is really somewhat of a misfortune to be fastened to such a business during the best years of youth and manhood. This aristocracy was selfish, but its selfishness was of a high kind. It was not given up either to avarice or to self-indulgence, but it valued what is best in life.

Hostility to the Fine Arts.

Commerce.

The reader may remember how Mr. Bagehot defended titles on the ground that they counterbalanced in some degree the power of wealth by setting up something else to be respected, and he even argued that title was a roundabout means of making intelligence respected:—

Mr. Bagehot's Defence of Titles.

"Nobility is the symbol of mind. It has the marks from which the mass of men always used to infer mind, and often still infer it. A common clever man who goes into a country place will get no reverence, but the 'old squire' will get reverence. Even after he is insolvent, when every one knows that his ruin is but a question of time, he will get five times as much respect from the common peasantry as the newly-made rich man who sits beside him. The common peasantry will listen to his nonsense more submissively than to the new man's sense. An old lord will get infinite reverence. His very exist-

Nobility the Symbol of Mind.

ence is so far useful that it awakens the sensation of obedience to a *sort* of mind."

Objection to Mr. Bagehot's Theory.

This passage contains, I think, a condemnation of the very use of nobility that the author intended to eulogise. If the common peasantry will listen more submissively to the nonsense of an old squire than they will to a new man's sense, it is hard to see how aristocracy, in this instance, can be really on the side of mind. Again, if the old lord gets infinite reverence, whether he is wise or foolish, it is a mere chance whether the reverence is favourable to the influence of mind or against it. If the old lord is a fool, and there is a wise man in the neighbourhood who is not listened to because the lord has the ear of the peasantry, the strength of title is not the candlestick of mind, but its extinguisher.

Frenchmen who write about England usually remark that mind is overshadowed by aristocracy; that mediocrities with titles get more consideration, and are listened to more respectfully, than better men without them. The exact truth is more as follows. Political celebrity in England is quite as strong as title. Any one who has the ear of the House of Commons, however humble his birth, is listened to in the country quite as attentively, quite as respectfully, as a lord. But title certainly overshadows literary and artistic celebrity. Not that this is of any real importance, for literary and artistic celebrity is not in its nature powerful, except over the intelligent, who are a minority in every population.

Value of Political Fame in England.

Aristocracy a School of Refinement.

If the aristocracies have not done much for the intellectual life, or for art, they have been serviceable in setting up a model of generally refined life, not for people of culture specially, but for all who had means enough

to copy it. This is not to be despised. A real aristocracy is a school of national refinement, and nations that are destitute of an aristocracy have to look to some fluctuating upper class, less perfectly regulated than aristocracy is by hereditary custom.

Also a School of Contentment.

Again, an aristocracy is a school of contentment. In conjunction with its natural ally, the Church, it encourages in every one a spirit of contentment with his lot in life, an acceptance of the lot as a settled thing, which, though it is not favourable to progress, is unquestionably favourable to happiness. A genuine aristocracy is also favourable to simplicity of life in every *noblesse* that has poor, yet honoured members.

Aristocracy favourable to Simplicity of Life.

Faults of the French *Noblesse.*

The faults of the French *noblesse* have not led to its absolute destruction, for it still survives, but they have deprived it of political power. Unteachableness, rigidity, want of sympathy with the rest of the nation, lack of practical sense,—these are some of the defects that have reduced the French aristocracy to a plight which, politically speaking, is pitiable and without a future. Since they allowed themselves to be enslaved by Louis XIV. the nobles have been out of sympathy with the common people, and since the Revolution they have been hostile to them, except in the way of charity to the poor. It would, perhaps, be expecting too much of human nature to hope that an ancient *noblesse* could forget the rough treatment it received in the first unreasoning outburst of popular vengeance; but it would not have been so dealt with if it had lived less selfishly, and cared for other interests than its own. It had brilliant intelligence, it had charming graces, and all the *éclat* of personal bravery, in combination with the rarest degree of polish,

yet it lost the due rewards of its admirable superiorities by its unkind scorn of the *manant* and the *roturier*. The "*manant*" and the "*roturier*" avenged themselves roughly when the time came. The people have improved their condition wonderfully, but it has been entirely by their own efforts, the consequence being that the aristocracy survives only as a caste, and has no political leadership.

It has lost Political Leadership.

Contempt for Work.

The present influence of the aristocratic caste in France is an evil influence in its discouragement of work. The caste includes a great number of people who have all been brought up to despise and abstain from the labour that earns bread. If the harm were confined to the caste itself it would be only a limited evil—unfortunately, it extends to all aspirants to aristocracy, to all the would-be genteel. This throws a degree of relative discredit on all money-earning occupations which certainly exceeds the prejudice of English gentility against them. Even literature and the fine arts become degrading as soon as they are lucrative,[1] a sentiment quite opposed to the more intelligent modern opinion in France. All the forms of trade are despicable for aristocrats, and when they hear of a family that has been in trade they say, with an air of genteel ignorance about the nature of the business, "*Ils ont vendu quelque chose.*" Their manners towards shopkeepers are often unpleasant, and exhibit a degree of *morgue* that is peculiarly irritating to a French tradesman.

Contempt for Trade.

An aristocratic caste may be an institution for which there is no further necessity, it may be a survival that has

[1] A French gentleman wanted to let me a country house, and said, with an air of conscious superiority, "It would be quiet and convenient for the prosecution of your—your *industry*."

become useless, but one likes to see it genuine of its kind, even in its latter days. Unfortunately the present French aristocracy, whilst encouraging idle habits by its contempt for work, encourages habits of imposture by the fatal facility with which it permits the encroachments of the false *noblesse*. I have often wondered how the old noble families ever tolerated these intruders, and I believe the only explanation to be that the intruders are such sure and subservient allies in politics and religion. It is really a system of recruiting.[1] The false noble fortifies his position by all available means, and there are none better than an ardent profession of those opinions that the genuine aristocracy approves. I said long ago in *Round my House* that the particle "de," which is popularly supposed to indicate nobility, was extensively assumed by families belonging really to the *bourgeoisie*, but I was not fully aware at that time on what a prodigiously extensive scale these usurpations have been made. Here is a single example. A public functionary, whose duties required frequent reference to registers in a particular locality, told me that he had at first been embarrassed by the changes of name in certain families. Plain names of the *bourgeoisie* had been laid aside for territorial designations with the "de" before them, and it was difficult at first sight to understand and remember these transformations. Having a curious and investigating disposition, the functionary amused himself by tracing out as many of these cases as he could discover, and he told

The False *Noblesse*.

Great Scale of Usurpations.

[1] As a system of recruiting party adherents, it has the great advantage of catching rather rich and influential people, especially landowners. Very poor families would gain nothing by the "de," and, in fact, they drop it when it is theirs by right.

me that in a single neighbourhood he had found no less than fifty families who had raised themselves into what is ignorantly but generally considered to be the noble caste by the addition of the "de." Amidst such an influx of new recruits the authentic old nobility is, in these days, completely overwhelmed. There being no strictly-kept peerage, as in England, there is nothing authoritative to refer to, and an injurious doubt is cast upon real coronets by the perplexing abundance of false ones. Besides the "de," the most positive titles are coolly assumed and worn. You may meet with people who live in an old château and are very *comme il faut*, very simple and well bred, without any appearance of false pretension whatever, yet they have just one little bit of false pretension—their title. They call themselves Count and Countess, yet are not Count and Countess at all. Their fortune was made in business two generations ago, and the château purchased, and the title of the old family that once lived there gradually assumed by a too familiar process.

New Recruits.

The French *noblesse*, as a caste, is spoiled by this intrusion and acceptance of false nobles, but if there were not this fatal objection it would be much more truly a caste than the British nobility and gentry. There is, in fact, no pure and well-guarded upper caste in England except simply the holders of titles. You may belong to the highest nobility in England by descent, and there will be nothing to distinguish you from a plebeian unless you are a son of the representative of the family. In every genuine *noblesse* noble blood continues to bear some distinctive mark of caste. The English way is more convenient, because it constantly throws off the poorer branches into the general mixture that we vaguely call

Absence of a pure Caste in England.

Younger Branches.

"the middle classes"; the continental way of preserving a noble caste, even in its poorer members, is more faithful to the principle of descent. The way of selecting new men for the English peerage is also a violation of the caste principle. They are not usually taken from well-descended families, but from the new rich, and in this way we constantly see men of low birth elevated to a position which instantly gives them precedence over the most ancient untitled families in England. In short, we live in a time of confusion between the true caste principle and the true democratic principle, a confusion that will ultimately be cleared away by the abolition of titles, though that is still in the distant future. Meanwhile the new rich in France may fairly argue that as they have not, like their English brethren, a sovereign to ennóble them, they have no resource but to ennoble themselves.

New Peers.

A moderate degree of poverty does not abolish caste in France, provided that the nobleman is just able to maintain external decency of appearance without working. In England it is impossible to maintain high caste without a complete staff of domestics. In both countries real poverty abolishes caste.

Abolition of Caste by Poverty.

It is impossible in England to assume and maintain falsely the position of a titled nobleman, but coats-of-arms are constantly assumed without right, and it is not uncommon in these days for people to take a name that does not belong to them by inheritance. If a plebeian Englishman chooses to adopt the name, and the arms too, of an old family, he can do so in perfect security.

Armorial Bearings.

I pass now from the noble to the professional castes.

The clergy in England are said to form part of the aristocracy, but this is true only of the Anglican clergy.

The Clergy.

The Dissenting clergy form part of the middle classes. The Anglican clergy itself is less aristocratic than it was in the earlier part of the nineteenth century; in fact, its position has varied greatly from one century to another. It is now said to be rather declining, as the clergy are recruited from an inferior class, both as to position and ability. A father may put his son into the Church because the lad is not keen-witted enough to be a successful attorney, or because there is not capital enough in the family to set him up as a manufacturer. There are also ways of entering the Church without the training of Oxford or Cambridge. Nevertheless, in spite of this decline, the Anglican clergy are still, as a body, incomparably superior to the French Roman Catholic clergy in the social sense. The French clergy are now almost exclusively recruited from the humble classes. Nine out of ten are sons of peasants, the tenth may be the son of an artisan or a gendarme. It is curious that the French aristocracy, which *professes* such deep respect for the Church, should no longer supply recruits for the clergy. Fewer and fewer of the sons of the *noblesse* become priests every year, and those who do now become priests shut themselves up in the religious orders, and are of no use for the common work of the parishes, many of which are left empty, in country places, for want of working priests to fill them. It would seem as if it were no longer thought *comme il faut* to be a parish priest, whilst it may be *comme il faut* to belong to one of the recognised orders, such as the Marists, the Jesuits, etc. The practical result is that in the country parishes many of the priests are burdened with extra duty, sometimes far from their homes, merely from an insufficient supply of

Superiority of the Anglican Clergy.

The French Clergy.

The Religious Orders.

ecclesiastics. This plain fact—which I do not give merely on my own authority, but on that of a French bishop who deplored it lately in an episcopal charge—is a valuable commentary on that devotion to the Church which the French aristocracy still professes so long as it entails no greater inconvenience than a perfunctory attendance at mass. There is, consequently, a *social severance* between the clergy and the aristocracy, though there may be a *political alliance.* The priest may have patrons in the château, he may have real friends there, but his relations and his equals are generally in the farm-houses.[1] The reason lies no deeper than the obvious fact that the duties of a parish priest are irksome and his life is austere. He is confined to one place, without amusements, and with society limited to peasants and to the few gentry who happen to be there for a part of the year only; his work is a continual servitude, and it is never done. He is allowed by law to marry, but not by the rules of his Church or the opinion of society, and his conduct is watched with the most jealous and unceasing scrutiny. To devote oneself to such an existence requires not merely the pretence to religious belief but its reality. That, and that alone, can make a human being happy in a life which is deprived of all worldly pleasures, and has no earthly rewards.

Social Position of the French Clergy.

The difference between the parish priest and the bishop, though great in England, is much greater in France. In England it is the difference between a gentleman and a peer, in France it is that between a common soldier and his colonel. Since royalty is dead, and the

Bishops.

[1] This is stated simply as a fact and not in depreciation. There is not a more respectable class in France than the peasantry.

great nobles politically paralysed by universal suffrage, the bishop seems all the greater as the sole survivor of the splendid personages of the middle ages. The grandeur of the Church is represented by the bishops, both in their social position, which, in the absence of royalty, is much higher than any other, and also in externals, such as the stately residence, the violet and gold of the costume, and the customary carriage and pair. It must be remembered, too, that the "Church" in Catholic language means the bishops, who are alone summoned to Œcumenical Councils, and not the inferior clergy, who have no vote, direct or indirect, the bishops not being elected by them.

French Officers.

Since the French army has become national, the military caste is not so much an aristocratic caste as it is in England. It is difficult for an Englishman to realise the position of officers in a French garrison town. They live very much amongst themselves, and spend many of their leisure hours in a café chosen specially by them, and called "*le café des officiers.*" Some of them are admitted into local society, but on their individual merits or in consequence of family connections; the uniform is not the passport that it is, or used to be, in England. I remember how, on the arrival of a new regiment, the English squires in the neighbourhood would go and call upon the officers to give them a welcome, and would very soon ask them to dinner. Before long the officers were on sufficiently friendly terms to join in country amusements and invite themselves to lunch. If there was a ball, they were invited as a matter of course. This intimacy between military officers and the local gentry was strongly marked in the English society of the

Position of Officers in England.

Wellingtonian age. In a French town there is no such ready welcome on the part of the leading inhabitants. The officers are treated like strangers staying in the hotels until some accident brings about an acquaintanceship.

The Army as a Career.

Still, although the military class in France is not one with the aristocracy, it is quite true that the military profession is the only career, in French opinion, for a gentleman of birth, unless he studies for the bar, which he generally does without any intent to practise.

The Official Class.

The official class of prefects, sub-prefects, and other members of the administrative hierarchy, form a caste quite apart from high society, which will not recognise office-holders under the Republic. I have known several of these officials who were thorough gentlemen, and had good private fortunes besides, but the higher classes ignored them as completely as if they had been personally unfit for society. The fact that the prefect is by virtue of his office the greatest personage in the department only makes him the more disliked. His rank is officially equal to that of an English lord-lieutenant, and he is more important in the sense of having more work to do and more real authority to exercise.[1] When, however, we compare the social position of the two we see how France is divided. England is not yet divided in the same way because the Crown makes the great official

The Prefect.

[1] He also takes precedence of the bishop. An intimate friend of mine was appointed to a prefecture. On his arrival the archbishop sent to say that he would receive him at his palace. This was an attempt to put the prefect in an inferior position, so he answered that it was not further from the palace to the prefecture than from the prefecture to the palace. The archbishop then came.

Contempt for Republican Officials.

appointments, or at least seems to make them. There is not now any political authority left standing in France which commands the respect of the upper classes. They do not respect authorities emanating from the people.

*Noblesse, Bourgeoisie, Peuple.*

Now, with regard to the professional and trading classes I should say that they are nearer to one another in France than in England. The old division of *Noblesse*, *Bourgeoisie*, *Peuple*, is still in constant use, and is extremely convenient as a general division of French classes. The *noblesse*, true or false, lives on its means, and has generally landed property; the *bourgeoisie* lives in more or less comfort, either on private means or on the gains of professions and trades; the *peuple* lives by manual labour and on wages. An artist, a solicitor, a doctor, belong to the *bourgeoisie*, and they are all three nearer to the shopkeepers and more familiar and friendly with them than are men who belong to the liberal professions in England.

Professional People.

Gentlemen.

A distinction of the greatest importance between England and France is indicated by the untranslatableness of the word "gentleman." The English reader knows what the word means. It is the sign of an ideal which may constitute caste or something else, for it often traverses caste. You frequently, in England, meet with men who are not of high birth, who are not very rich, yet whom all recognise as gentlemen, and this simple recognition places them on an equality, of a certain kind, with people of higher rank. In France, this peculiar kind of equality is unknown. The *bourgeois* is never the equal of the noble, though he may be the better gentleman of the two. It is undeniable that, in this peculiar sense, English society is more *égalitaire* than French.

The teaching classes are in some respects a lower caste in France than in England. This difference may be in part due to the clerical character of English education, which gave a dignity and almost a sacred character to schoolmasters. In France the numerous professors in the University are not well paid, and often eke out a slender income by private lessons. Many of them are cultivated gentlemen, others are much less refined, as may be expected in a very mixed class, and an old principal tells me that the body as a whole has less *tenue* and self-respect than it had formerly. "In my time," he said, "you might always recognise an *universitaire* by the correctness of his appearance and bearing, but to-day he is not distinguishable from anybody else." In England university degrees confer some social position, especially if they have been gained at Oxford or Cambridge; in France they confer little or none, certainly they do not make the recipient *du monde*. The consequence is more and more a severance between the fashionable and the educated classes, and it may even come, in course of time, to this, that a high degree of education may be taken as evidence that a man does not belong to "good society."

The Teaching Class in France.

Severance between Fashionable and Educated Classes.

There is a difference between England and France in the strictness of rural caste. Amongst the French peasants we find a set of rigid caste-customs separating the class completely from the *bourgeois* and the *ouvrier*. There is nothing answering to this with the same universality and rigour in English rural life. The English farmer answers more to the French rural *bourgeois* of different grades; his life is more the general life of the nation, it is not peculiar and behind the time. There are signs that the true peasant life, with its austerity, its

Peasant Life in France.

self-denial, its patriarchal rules and traditions, will not, in France itself, very long survive the influences of the town, the railway, and the newspaper. It will be a severe loss to the country when it passes away. The peasants do not themselves know how superior they are to the classes they are beginning to imitate.

The strength of caste may be measured by the degradation of the Pariah. As the caste-principle declines he rises, and when it dies he is no longer distinguishable by his vileness, but is lost in the general equality.

The Pariah in England.

English intolerance having been chiefly religious, its Pariah has been the Infidel. France is the country of political intolerance, and there the Pariah is the Republican. "What!" I may be asked, "you speak of the Republicans as Pariahs at a time when they hold all the ministries and receive all the ambassadors?" The answer to this objection is that they have never been more under the ban of high society than since they won political power. In England the Infidel is not quite the Pariah that he used to be when Deists were "pestiferous vermin." To-day, under his new name of "Agnostic," he is beginning to be tolerated.

The Pariah in France.

On the contrary, the French intolerance of the Republican is more intense than ever. *Canaille* is the mildest term that the charity of the *bien pensant* would apply to him—

"E cortesia fu lui esser villano."

# CHAPTER II

## WEALTH

ENGLAND and France are the richest countries in Europe, and, of the two, England is generally believed to be the richer. I believe the same, and yet am unable to give evidence of an entirely satisfactory character. Considering each country as a vast estate, composed of land and house property, we meet with our first difficulty in the uncertainty of the estimates. The French Government is at the present time (1888) employing its agents in a new and elaborate valuation. External trade is not a certain guide, as the two populations are differently situated, the French living much more on home produce than the English. The revenue is sometimes taken as an indication of national wealth, and it is so no doubt when nations are extremely unequal; for example, the vast difference between the revenues of France and of Greece is good evidence that France is the wealthier of the two countries. When, however, we make a financial comparison between two states as nearly equal as France and England, the revenue ceases to be a criterion. It is true that the French people pay more money into the national treasury than the English; but they may be doing it only to their own impoverishment. What we call

Comparative Wealth of England and France.

The Revenue.

"revenue" is not like a private income, it is a burden or a charge, proving only the power to bear the burden, and such a power may be but temporary. It is only the most foolish Frenchmen who are proud of the enormous taxation that afflicts the Republic as a consequence of monarchical errors and of its own.

Newness of Everything in France and England.

The wealth, both of England and France, has been vastly increased by the prodigious creation of new things which has taken place in the present century. They are both of them very old countries, yet almost everything in them is new. A man of sixty, travelling about, is constantly seeing and using things that did not exist when he was born. The railways he travels upon, the hotels where he stays, the great industrial buildings, the shipping, are of his own time. The towns are either recent or in great part reconstructed. The industrial activity of the present age is so enormous that in the course of a single generation it has done more in public and private works than all the previous generations had left behind them. Then there is the industrial plant; both nations have increased their producing powers by multiplying *tools* of all kinds, from colossal steam-engines down to sewing-machines. England took the lead in this direction, but France has followed. In some things France has been the leader, notably in the construction of war-ships with defensive armour, and in the manufacture of breech-loading cannon. England set the example of huge industrial exhibitions, and here again, as in railways, France has been a successful imitator.

Industrial Plant.

War-ships.

Exhibitions.

Excess of the Producing Power.

The industrial development of both countries has led to a state of things in which the producing power surpasses the actual wants. To keep the working popula-

tions in full employment it would be necessary to do over again all that has been done; but the works accomplished remain as impediments to future labour. Paris does not need to be reconstructed every twenty years; a network of railways has not to be made in every century. Thus industrialism produces both riches and poverty. First, it creates an army with appliances too elaborate and too efficient for any permanent need, and then it fails to pay its own soldiers. The present condition of England and France is discouraging, for the reason that it is the skilled workman who is so often without employment. The evil has attracted more public attention in England, but the roads of France are covered with miserable tramps and vagabonds, many of whom are well-trained "*ouvriers sans travail.*"

*Ouvriers sans Travail.*

Success in industry is proved by the attainment of wealth, so that it becomes, in an industrial age, the evidence of something greater than itself. It is taken as the proof of ability, of the kind of talent most valued, and so it comes to pass that people of the most simple habits, who have really no need for riches, often desire to make a fortune as a proof of their own energy, and from a dread of being classed amongst the unsuccessful. This is one of the strongest reasons for money-getting when the genuine instinct of avarice is absent.

Success in Industry.

There is a most important difference between England and France in the necessity for wealth in certain positions, quite independently of the desire for money as a possession. The expression "a large income is a necessary of life" is an English expression, and is true in the country and classes in which it originated. What it means is not that the Englishman cares much for personal self-indul-

The Necessity for Wealth.

gence, but that if his income is not large he finds himself exposed to vexatious or humiliating consequences, unless his position is otherwise so insignificant as to escape attention. It is entirely understood that all titled persons in England ought to be rich, and not only all titled persons but all who belong to the upper classes. On inquiring into the causes of this belief we do not find them in the love of money for itself, as a miser loves it, but in the English passion for style and state, and in the contempt which is felt for those who cannot afford to maintain an expensive standard of living.

Title and Wealth.

The Passion for Style.

Wealth is not only more necessary in England than in France, it is also more valuable socially; it does more to elevate its possessor, to give him rank and station. In England the condition of things is, for the present, singularly agreeable to the rich man who is also ambitious. It is not like a country without an upper class, and it is not like a country with a closed and exclusive upper class. England has a brilliant and attractive upper class that the rich man may aspire to enter, and which receives him with encouraging cordiality. He has something to desire, which is at the same time well worth desiring and not beyond his reach. A true aristocracy would keep him at a distance; in a genuine democracy he could never become more than a wealthy citizen; in the present very peculiar condition of English society there is still an aristocracy for him to enter, and it receives him to be one of its own.

England agreeable for the Ambitious Rich.

He has the advantage, also, of living in a country where the middle classes are proud of the wealth of the rich. They talk of the large incomes of the nobility with an interest that may be a survival of ancient feudal

The Middle Classes and the Rich.

sentiments, a vassal's pride in his liege lord. It is a pleasure to them to think that the Duke of Westminster can drive out with his guests from Eaton Hall in a procession of his own carriages. Even the freaks of the last Duke of Portland are not displeasing to them, because his mole-burrowing was done on such a costly scale. The vast estates of Sutherland and Breadalbane seem to give every Scotchman a superiority over the comparatively landless French *noblesse.* The British nature is so inclined to be happy in wealth that when the individual Briton has little of his own to rejoice in he generously takes pleasure in that of the nearest lord. This pleasure is the more pure for him that he is almost incapable of envy.[1]

French Feeling about Riches.

The state of French feeling about riches is more difficult to define with perfect accuracy. It varies very much with different localities. In a trading town money is everything, being the sign of superiority in trade, and the biggest capitalist is the greatest man. In an aristocratic centre money without caste counts for very little, and the rich *bourgeois* keeps his place, retaining the most

[1] George du Maurier attributes this happiness in the wealth of others to what he calls "The British Passion for inequality," illustrated by him in *Punch.* An Englishman is walking with a Frenchman in Hyde Park, and gives utterance to that passion in these words :—

"*Sturdy Briton.* It's all very well to turn up your nose at your *own* beggarly Counts and Barons, Mossoo! But you can't find fault with *our* nobility! Take a man like our Dook o' Bayswater, now! Why, he could buy up your Foreign Dukes and Princes by the dozen! and as for you and me, he'd look upon us as so much dirt beneath his feet! Now, that's something *like* a nobleman, that is! That's a kind o' nobleman that I, as an Englishman, feel as I've got some right to be *proud* of!"

Separableness of Rank and Wealth in France.

simple and unpretending manners. I should say that rank and wealth are much more separate, or at least *separable*, in France than in England. People are accustomed to see nobles of high rank with very moderate fortunes, and they are also accustomed to meet with rich *bourgeois* who do not aspire to aristocracy either for themselves or their descendants. Amongst the *noblesse* themselves money is regarded merely as a great convenience, and rank is respected still, and fully recognised, even in combination with very narrow means. This is the purely aristocratic as opposed to the plutocratic sentiment.

French Equality.

French equality does not bring together the *noblesse* and the *bourgeoisie*, as the *noblesse* is exclusive, except towards the false *noblesse* that has once got itself adopted.[1] But equality often produces a degree of familiarity, astonishing to an Englishman, between the rich *bourgeoisie* and the common people. This may be explained by the absence of the word "gentleman" and of that separation of classes, without the help of title, which the word "gentleman" implies. The rich *bourgeois*, in France, is nothing but a *bourgeois;* he has never thought "I am a gentleman," and the difference between him and a common man is but a pecuniary difference.

Sanctity of Wealth in England.

Wealth has a dignity and almost a sanctity in England which seems to be connected with religious beliefs, and especially with the familiar knowledge of the Old Testament, almost an unknown book in France. In this respect the English hold a middle place between the

[1] The want of money, in these days, very frequently induces a French nobleman to marry an heiress in the middle classes. This is the most powerful cause of infractions of French exclusiveness.

French and the Jews. I certainly have myself known rich English people who believed that Divine Providence had appointed them, personally, to have authority over the poor, and that the poor owed them much deference for that reason. It is a kind of divine right, and it is even capable of a sort of scientific proof, for wealth is one of the natural forces, and, in the last analysis, an accumulation of solar energy given into the hand of a man.[1]

Sentiments of the Poor towards the Rich.

It is sometimes asserted, and perhaps still more generally believed, that the sentiment of the poor towards the rich is one of adoration in England and of hatred in France. The truth about English sentiment I have endeavoured, in a general way, to tell. The peculiar advantage of wealth in England is that it so soon confers caste—that the rich are so soon believed to have rank, even without parchments and the royal signature. They become "gentlefolks," when in France they would be only "*gros bourgeois*." The French sentiment about wealth varies generally between a kind of respect that is not at all servile, and unfeigned indifference. The English have a great difficulty in understanding this indifference. I find, for instance, in Mr. Matthew Arnold's article in the *Nineteenth Century* for February 1885, the statement about France that "wealth creates the most savage enmity there, because it is conceived as a means for gratifying appetites of the most selfish and vile kind." There may, of course, be instances of such feeling

French Respect and Indifference.

Matthew Arnold.

[1] The essential difference between the scientific and the religious views is that the one sees a special Providential commission, where the other only perceives an undesigned accumulation of natural force.

amongst poor French anarchists and radicals. It exists even in England itself, and was expressed long ago with sufficient vigour by a poet of the people in fiery stanzas all ending with the refrain—

Gerald Massey.

"Our Sons are the rich men's Serfs by day,
And our daughters his Slaves by night."

Those two lines express *exactly* the sentiment attributed by Mr. Arnold to the French; the last of them, especially, is a precise translation into poetic form of what Mr. Arnold says about "gratifying appetites of the most selfish and vile kind."[1]

When I read very comprehensive statements I always adopt the rather prosaic method of looking back on my own experience, if I have any experience that can throw light upon the subject. In this case, having lived much in the country, both in England and France, and known poor and rich people in the numerical proportion that they bear to one another in real life, I may perhaps be accepted as a competent witness. My testimony is as follows.

The Author's Testimony. Lancashire.

When I was a young man in Lancashire the population of mill-hands was not in a state of "savage enmity"

[1] There is more English poetry of the same order, for example the following, also quoted from Mr. Gerald Massey—

"Oh! this world might be lighted
With Eden's first smile—
Angel-haunted—unblighted,
With Freedom for Toil:
But they wring out our blood
For their banquet of gold!
They annul laws of God,
Soul and body are sold!
Hark now! hall and palace,
Ring out, dome and rafter!
Ay, laugh on, ye callous!
In Hell there'll be laughter."

towards the rich, but its sentiments were not in the least deferential, and they were not friendly. We cannot call those sentiments friendly which express themselves in jibes and jeers. It is the simple truth that well-dressed ladies and gentlemen avoided meeting the hands when they came out of the factories to escape personal annoyance. They were not in bodily danger, but they were liable to be openly criticised by the lower classes, whose tongues were both sharp and merciless. The factory hands had unbounded natural impudence and a very aggressive disposition. Some of them had the gifts of wit, humour, and sarcasm, to which the Lancashire dialect is highly favourable; and it was their delight to exercise these gifts at the expense of any unfortunate gentleman or lady who fell in their way. A telling hit at the victim, whom nobody pitied, was hailed with shouts of satisfaction. A lady, who was a neighbour of ours in Lancashire, happened to be walking in a muddy street, so she lifted her skirts a little. This unluckily occurred near a group of factory girls, whose sharp eyes, of course, noticed the lady's stockings, which were of some unbleached material. Thereupon one factory girl cried out, "Well, afore *Oi'd* don stockin's na better weshed nur them theere!"[1] and there was a general explosion of laughter, before which the lady was glad to drop the curtain of her skirts. Nor was this critical disposition confined to the factory operatives. I happened one day to be wearing a new topcoat, and was passing near some houses in course of erection. One of the masons shouted out from his ladder something very coarse and ill-natured

Aggressiveness of Factory Hands.

Their Wit and Sarcasm.

Masons.

1 "Well, before *I'd* put on stockings no better washed than those!"

about my topcoat; so I stopped to reason with him and said, "Why cannot you let my topcoat alone? I came by it honestly; it is paid for." "*Paid for, is't?*" he answered, with a sneer of ineffable contempt. "It woddn't 'a bin if th' ad 'ad t' addle th' brass."[1] So I went away defeated, amidst the jeers of the other workmen. I may perhaps trouble the reader with an anecdote about another mason, in which there is more real hostility to wealth and refinement. When I was a boy, an old Lancashire mason was making an alteration in a room that was to be my bedroom. This involved the blocking-up of an old window; and instead of building the wall of the full thickness, the mason contented himself with a thin wall, leaving a recess. "I shall be glad of this recess," I said, "it will do to put the washing-stand in." The mention of such a luxury irritated the man's democratic sentiments, and he swore at the washing-stand and at me with many a bitter oath, although he was working for my uncle, who too kindly employed him.

Sense of Equality in Lancashire.

Even when the Lancashire people did not intend to be uncivil, their manners often asserted a sense of equality that I have never met with from the corresponding class in France. I have often stayed in Lancashire with a friend, now no more, who was one of the richest men in his neighbourhood, and in Lancashire this means great wealth. As there was an old intimacy between us, we called each other by our Christian names; he was Henry, and I was Philip. This was natural in our case; but what seemed less explicable was that when we walked out together and met the wage-earning people

[1] "Paid for, is it? It would not have been if thou hadst had to earn the money."

in the neighbourhood, the men would keep their hands in their pockets, and sometimes, as a sort of special favour, cock their heads on one side by way of a bow, and say, "Well, 'Ennery!" in token of friendly recognition. Assuredly there was not, in such a salutation, any trace of "savage enmity" against wealth, but neither was there any special respect for it. Either because rich men were common in Lancashire, or because the people were extremely independent, wealth used to get but a very moderate amount of deference there.

A Lancashire Salute.

I lived at one time close to Towneley Park, and remember that although we always called the then representative of that very wealthy and very ancient family Mr. Towneley, till he became colonel of the local militia regiment, after which we gave him his military title, the peasantry spoke of him either as "Tayunly" or as "Charles," and his brother they called "John." This was not hostile, and it was not insulting, but it cannot be considered deferential.

Lancashire Familiarity.

In France I am known by sight to many hundreds of people in the poorer classes, perhaps I may say to thousands, and they believe me (erroneously) to be what they call rich, because I live in the manner of a very small country gentleman. More than that, they all know that I am an Englishman, a difference of nationality that would not generally tend to repress any tendency to popular satire. The simple truth, however, is that I have never once been insulted, never once even jeered at, by these poor French people, because I had a good coat on my back. On the contrary, numbers of people, whose names I do not know, are in the habit of lifting their hats to me; and if I drive along the road on a market day,

The Author's Experience in France.

when the peasants are returning to their homes, I have to keep my right hand free to answer their salutations by lifting my own hat, according to the courteous French custom. One of my friends, a Frenchman, is really a rich man, and when we walk out together in the town where he is best known, he is constantly raising his hat. I find this practice to be much the same in other towns with well-to-do men who are local notables, and I know an important village where any one who looks like a gentleman will be saluted by every inhabitant he meets.

French Rural Civility.

In the French rural districts the aristocracy are very well known individually, and esteemed or not according to their personal qualities. When they are just to their tenants and kind to the poor, these merits are fully acknowledged, and the great folks are regarded with respect and even affection. "*C'est un bon Monsieur*" the peasants will say of the squire, or, if they include his family, "*Ce sont de braves gens, c'est du bon monde.*" I know an honest French gentleman and his wife who are always ready with kindness and money when there is any case of real distress, and I do not believe that there is any country in the world where they would be more esteemed than they are in their own neighbourhood.

Absence of Familiarity in France.

I have never known, in France, anything like the Lancashire familiarity in speaking of the rich. The greatest landowner is always either called by his title or at least gets the usual "Monsieur." He is "Monsieur le Marquis" or "Monsieur de ——," and often, with a mixture of local feeling and respect, he is "Notre Monsieur," to distinguish him from other people's Messieurs. I never in my life heard a French peasant call a country gentleman by his bare name, or by his

Christian name only. I know all the tenants on an estate where the rents were raised in a manner that created the greatest dissatisfaction, but, whilst expressing this dissatisfaction in just and straightforward language, the tenants never infused any hatred into their talk, nor did they abandon the usual respectful form in speaking of the landlord. They said that he was hard with them, and that he was acting against his own interest, which he did not seem to understand, as it was impossible for a tenant to work the farms permanently on the new terms. This is the whole substance of what they said, the complete expression of their "savage enmity."

Wealth not an Objection in Parliamentary Candidates.

At election times I never found that it was a ground of objection to a republican candidate that he was a rich man. There has been a sort of understanding amongst many reactionary rich people in France, of late years, to give as little employment as possible to the wage-earning classes, in order to punish them for voting in favour of republican candidates. The poor resent this attempt to starve them into political subservience, a feeling which is entirely distinct from hatred to the rich as a class. Rich men who continue to give employment are, from contrast, better liked than ever.

Wealth and National Defence.

I cannot close this chapter without some reference to the wealth of the two nations from the military point of view, that we are all compelled to consider. To be rich is of no use in actual warfare unless we are also ready. The French had plenty of money in 1870, as they proved shortly afterwards by paying two hundred millions sterling to Germany, yet that money could not win the battles of Gravelotte and Sedan. At the same time the luxurious establishments of rich French people, the wines in their

cellars, their collections of pictures, their beautiful books, their pretty carriages, all the pleasant things that are commonly associated with the idea of wealth, were of no móre practical value than the embroidery on the mocassins of a Red Indian. The truth is unpleasant, but we have to face it, that wealth itself is valueless for warlike purposes *unless it has been employed in time*, and that it is not the richest nation, but the most prepared nation, that lives best through the day of trial.[1]

Unorganised Wealth Valueless in War.

[1] Just before returning the proof-sheet of this chapter I heard one French peasant describing his landlord to another in these terms :—

"Monsieur le Comte is one of the best landlords in this neighbourhood. He thoroughly understands agriculture, he looks after everything on the estate, but he never presses his tenants, never asks them for rent. On the contrary, he is always ready to help a tenant in any reasonable outlay."

The landlord in question is a rich nobleman, living on his own land, and not by any means regarded with "the most savage enmity," though he happens to be a Frenchman. I have seen his château and estate, a fine property, beautifully situated.

# CHAPTER III

## ALLIANCES

THE notion of marriage as an alliance is more generally prevalent in France than in England, where it belongs only to the upper, or at least the wealthier classes. The ideal of a French marriage is the practice of princes in the middle ages and at the Renaissance, when they were affianced to ladies whom they had never seen, merely on the ground that their social position was suitable. The ideal of an English marriage is that the social position of both parties must be suitable, but that they ought previously to have some acquaintance with each other and some appearance of affection. There are, however, many exceptions in the practice of both countries. In both, there is a strong disapproval of the *mésalliance*, which goes so far that even in England it is said that society will condone a seduction more willingly.

Marriage as an Alliance.

The French Ideal.

The English Ideal.

The dictionaries say that *mésalliance* signifies marriage with an inferior, but they fail to explain the kind of inferiority indicated. Would moral or intellectual inferiority in one of the parties constitute a *mésalliance* for the other? It would most assuredly in reality, and bring its own daily and hourly punishment; but opinion overlooks these trifles, which only concern the parties directly

Definition of *Mésalliance*.

interested. Does a *mésalliance* result from a difference of rank? English opinion is very elastic about rank; we see marriages between titled and untitled people every day. Does it result from inequality of wealth? That inequality is far more frequent between married people in England, an aristocratic country, than under the French Republic. The rule against *mésalliances* in England amounts to no more than this, that the parties to the marriage ought to belong to the same *monde*, that is, they ought to have been seen in the same houses. In France it is a *mésalliance* for a noble to marry a commoner, and this certainly marks a more trenchant line than any that exists in England, where a commoner may belong to the aristocracy, which he cannot do in France, unless he succeeds in making himself a false noble. Marriages with rich commoners are not infrequent in France, but they are always confessedly *mésalliances*. On the whole, I should say that so far as marriage is concerned, ideas of class are decidedly more rigorous in France than in England. The woman's name and condition survive more after the marriage in France. Great numbers of French people put their wife's surname after their own, and even if this is not done formally, the linen and silver may be marked with the two initials. A Frenchman will sometimes use his mother's surname instead of his father's, if it seems to him more euphonious. In formal announcements of deaths and marriages the wife's surname is frequently preserved. The habit of saying Madame de B. *née* de C. is a French habit, and she may be called in legal documents Jeanne de C., wife of Gaston de B., as if her name survived after marriage, which it really does in the French conception of marriage.

*Mésalliances* in England.

Ideas of Class in France.

Preservation of the Wife's Surname in France.

After careful observation I have arrived at the conclusion that the French *de* before a name, whether rightly or fraudulently borne (for that makes little perceptible difference), is equivalent to about ten thousand pounds in the marriage market and will often count for more. It is wonderful that it should be so, considering that all French people know how frequently the *de* is assumed; but it seems to be valued as a mark that the bearer belongs to the gentry, which, in fact, he generally does. The genuine nobility who have become too poor to keep a place in genteel society, and have to work for their living, seldom retain the *particule*, or retain it only for a short time. If they did not drop it themselves the world would drop it for them. I have met with several instances of this. To be able to retain the *particule* is therefore a sort of practical evidence that one belongs to the upper classes. It is also a kind of guarantee that he will not profess liberal opinions. As a rule the new and false noble is more royalist than the Pretender himself, and certainly more clerical than the clergy.

Pecuniary Value of the French *de*.

Loss of the *Particule*.

The New and False Noble.

The rule that marriages are made from inclination in England and from interest in France requires to be understood with very great reserves. When English writers have France in their minds they assert the rule very positively, but when the repellent French influence does not deflect their judgment they become exceedingly frank about the hunting after rank and fortune in the great London marriage market. It would be easy to quote novels and essays and social sketches of all kinds which paint London society as a vast field of rivalry, where matrimonial ambition lays itself out continually for high prizes, and either triumphs in the winning of them

The London Marriage Market.

or has to taste the bitterness of defeat. Even the novelists who describe country life appear to believe that worldly motives operate frequently in the provinces.

Worldly Motives elsewhere.

This is one of the many instances in which the same thing is called by different names. There is no exact translation of "*mariage de convenance*" in English. "*Convenance*" would be most nearly translated by "suitableness," but the word "*convenance*" has a certain connection with what is right and proper; "*c'est inconvenant*" means "it is improper." The "*mariage de convenance*" is a marriage that appears to be suitable, I mean *that other people consider to be so.* Of course they are often egregiously mistaken; they think it perfectly "suitable" to fasten two people together for life who are quite unfitted for anything like companionship. Byron's marriage was a very perfect "*mariage de convenance,*" and we know what came of it.

*Le Mariage de Convenance.*

Byron's Marriage.

In England these are called "prudent marriages," but when they occur in France the English speak of them with strong disapprobation as "business transactions." This is an example of the great art of "putting things."

A prudent marriage is not necessarily a business transaction either in France or England. Let us consider a real case. A young gentleman (French or English) dislikes the idea of permanent celibacy, yet his income, though rather more than sufficient for a bachelor, is inadequate for the expenses of marriage. He marries a woman with some fortune. This cannot be described as "a business transaction" unless he gains by it, and in most cases he gains nothing, he only protects himself against social *déchéance* or financial ruin. He acts without a view to profit, purely in self-defence. He wishes to

Prudent Marriages.

A real Case.

marry without injuring himself; he does not wish to turn marriage into a profitable transaction. Nine-tenths of French marriages are made exactly in this way.

French customs in contracting marriage differ from the English customs chiefly in this, that the French know so little of each other before they are betrothed (often nothing whatever), the marriage having been arranged by other people. Here is a real instance. A young gentleman of my acquaintance was engaged to one of two sisters before he had seen either, and when he met them together in a drawing-room he asked his mother which was to be his wife. This is a supremely perfect example of a genteel arrangement in France, where the less people know of each other before marriage the more are they *comme il faut.* I remember being much amused by the indignation of a very beautiful young French lady about a rumour that she had been wedded for love. She reiterated her assurance that it was a baseless fabrication, that her husband had only seen her once before their betrothal, and then quite formally in the presence of other people, and that their marriage had been entirely one of "*convenance.*" In short, she repelled the idea of love as if it had been a disgraceful and unmerited imputation.[1] English writers who wish to depreciate French people can scarcely exaggerate the mutual ignorance in which genteel French marriages are usually made. There are, however, occasional exceptions, and I myself have known

French Marriage Customs.

The *Comme il faut.*

Mutual Ignorance of French *Fiancés.*

[1] Probably her chief reason, unexpressed, was that to have been asked in marriage for her good looks would have implied a deficiency of dowry, or, at least, left room for the supposition that there had not been dowry enough, of itself, to attract an offer of marriage.

a few French people who condemned the system strongly. As to the lower classes, especially the peasantry, courtship goes on almost after the English fashion. There are "*mariages d'inclination*" in all classes, though they become less and less frequent as you ascend the social scale. That such marriages *must* exist will be evident to any one who reflects that in France there are dowerless girls who get married nevertheless. Neither does a dowerless girl invariably accept the first young gentleman who proposes himself. I myself have known several poor French girls who refused good offers; a very striking instance came within my knowledge during the composition of this volume.[1] A French mother said to me, "I have never regretted not to have been able to give dowries to my daughters. They had several offers which were addressed to themselves and not to their purses, and they married most happily." The expression "marry for money" would apply, no doubt, to some cases (as in England, for there are fortune-hunters everywhere), but it does not apply to the great majority of French marriages. The accurate way of stating the case is this. *A Frenchman generally expects his wife to bear part of the household expenses.* As it does not often happen that the wife can follow a profession or a trade, such an expectation amounts to the expectation of a dowry. In most cases the amount of this dowry is so moderate that an Englishman would say the girl had nothing—he would not take

Dowerless French Girls.

The Truth about French Marriages.

Moderate Expectations.

[1] I was permitted to read a letter from the young lady's father, in which he said, "The offer was quite beyond anything that my daughter could have hoped for, but after full consideration she decided to decline it, and I think she acted wisely, as money is not everything in this world." The girl was left entirely free, as if she had been in England.

such a sum into consideration, one way or the other, when he married. For me (who know a great deal more about the inside of French life than can conveniently be printed), I have come to the conclusion that with the present rate of expenses a dowry must be much larger than French dowries usually are to give the young husband the satisfaction of having made a good financial speculation by his marriage. A few hundreds of pounds or a *very* few thousands are the ordinary dowries in the middle classes, and neither the hundreds nor the thousands are any compensation for the pitiless pecuniary exigencies of married life. No young gentleman in his senses imagines that he can improve his financial position by marrying a young lady of elegant tastes endowed with two hundred a year. Yet that income, at five per cent, represents a capital of a hundred thousand francs, which is an exceptionally large dowry for a French girl in the middle classes. A girl whose father can give four thousand pounds has probably been brought up in a family living in some style, and she will expect a considerable expenditure.[1] It might be a better speculation to take an industrious housewife of simple tastes, without a penny in the world. The small dowries and the very large ones may be useful to two different classes of men. The small dowries are often valuable to people in the struggling classes because they may enable the husband to advance his trade. A journeyman joiner marries a girl with five hundred pounds and becomes a master, a very

Ordinary French Dowries.

Small Dowries.

[1] A girl with £200 a year will expect, in marriage, a household expenditure of £800 a year. I proposed this theoretical proportion to a French gentleman of much experience, and he said that the estimate was moderate.

small shopkeeper may take a larger shop. But what is the good of, say, a thousand pounds to a poor physician or professor? The money by itself might be acceptable, but a wife with it can only mean an increase of his poverty. Yet this is the kind of "marrying for money" that is constantly practised in France. It is no more than a sort of partial prudence in cases where complete prudence would be not to marry at all.

Moderate Prudence rare in England.

In England this sort of *moderate* deference to prudential considerations is comparatively rare. An Englishman marries for affection decidedly, or for money with equal decision. He despises a small dowry. The same man may marry for pure love with absolute disdain of money, or he may sacrifice affection and seek for a wealthy heiress. He would not, like a Frenchman, be turned aside from a love-match by five or six hundred pounds.

Nearly all ranks in France are moderately prudent with regard to marriage, but in England it is only the comfortable classes that are so. The imprudence of the lower middle classes and of the people is almost without limit. They talk about marriage, and they enter upon it, exactly as if pecuniary difficulties had no existence. One of my friends was invited to a wedding where rather genteel appearances were observed, but nobody except himself had any cash. At the end of the ceremony the young bridegroom approached him and borrowed fourteen shillings to pay the fees. The money was never returned.

Imprudence in the English Lower Classes.

I think it may fairly be said that there is more marrying *simply for marriage* in France than in England. What I mean may be made clearer by a particular instance. A French lady once told me and several

Marrying for Marriage only.

other people that her son was going to be married. "Who is the young lady?" I inquired. "Oh," she answered, "I only mean that my son has decided to marry, he has not yet fixed upon any young lady; that is a matter for future consideration." This, I should say, is very characteristic of French habits of thought about marriage. A young Frenchman will live on for some years without troubling his head about the matter, when suddenly, nobody knows why, he will come to the conclusion that he ought to get married, and then he will very likely ask some old lady to manage the business for him. In the clerical party marriages are often made by priests, who have great influence in finding rich girls for young men likely to be dutiful sons of the Church. Open unbelievers cannot hope to benefit by these influences. In England also a reputation for strict orthodoxy is very valuable to a young gentleman at the time of marriage; it is, in fact, or certainly was some years ago, more valuable than a reputation for morality. I myself have known instances of young Englishmen who married well and were known to be immoral, when they would not have had the most distant chance of "marrying money" if they had not been regular attendants at divine worship.

A Decision to Marry.

Clerical Influence.

Orthodoxy.

Morality.

My own opinions on these matters are of little consequence to any one, but as a writer is constantly exposed to misrepresentation, I will state them very briefly in self-defence. It seems to me that marriage may be undertaken from a variety of motives and be fairly happy, either in France or England, but that the only foundation of the best happiness is companionship. How this ideal is to be realised every one must judge for himself. In my opinion it depends much more upon mental sympathy

The Author's Opinion.

than on equality of fortune or rank, or even on identity of nationality. Marriage is a lifelong conversation, and I have never found that conversation with any lady was more interesting because she had money in her purse.

Partial Prudence.

Again, with regard to the use of the words "prudence" and "prudent" concerning marriage, I should say that these words are employed far too exclusively, both in France and England, with reference to pecuniary considerations, which are not the whole of prudence but only a very limited part of it. To marry a person whom you have never seen, or of whose character, gifts, and tastes you know only what can be learned in one or two short and formal interviews, is an act of the wildest imprudence, however wealthy the person may be, and this kind of utter rashness is exceedingly common amongst French people, who are prudent to excess in all that touches fortune. One consideration, especially, exhibits this rashness in its true character. To marry a woman of whom you know nothing is to entrust your children to a woman of whom you know as little.

Rashness of "arranged" Unions.

# CHAPTER IV

## INTERCOURSE

Comparative Sociability.

ONE of the most prevalent popular errors, for it is prevalent both in France and England, is the belief that the French are the more sociable people of the two. The truth is quite the contrary; the English are much more sociable than the French; the English associate together much more readily for purposes of business, of culture, and of pleasure; the force of fellowship is greater in England, and so is the feeling of subordination towards leaders.

Repellent English Manners.

The error seems to have taken its origin in the outwardly repellent manners of the English towards persons whom they do not know. They look with suspicion on new or accidental acquaintances; they hate to be intruded upon, and they have an undefined dread of having acquaintances forced upon them who may be a little inferior in rank. But towards all whom they consider safe, that is, well bred and unobtrusive, and belonging to their own class, they exhibit a degree of sociability which far exceeds the sociability of the French.

The English very rarely have the temper that can amuse itself with a little unrestrained intercourse of an accidental kind. Novelists and philosophers have that

kind of openness of interest, but they are a small minority. It is much more common amongst the French. The ordinary Frenchman amuses himself with studying human nature, and likes a conversation with a temporary acquaintance: It serves to pass the time better, he thinks, than "putting his nose into a book." Most of what the French know they have got by conversation, and so far as readiness to talk is concerned they are sociable. But with all his apparent openness and frankness the Frenchman has his own reserve too, and fences his life round in his own way. People say that "the Englishman's house is his castle;" if so, the Frenchman's house may be described as his armoured turret. "*On ne donne pas la clef de sa maison*" is not an English expression, and it means more than the material key.

French Liking for Talk.

French Reserve.

A Parisian invites you to dinner, and will probably take you to an expensive restaurant; a Londoner will offer his roast-beef in his own house. The separation of the sexes is much greater in France than in England. You may know a great number of married Frenchmen and have a very slight acquaintance with their wives, perhaps not enough to recognise them in the street. Nay, you may even habitually visit Frenchmen in their own private apartments without ever seeing their wives and daughters at all. Frenchwomen (I do not mean in Paris, but in the provinces) often live in something like oriental seclusion, but beyond this there is in the feminine mind an extreme tenacity about real or imaginary rank. The husband may have intimate friends, whom he respects for their character or admires for their talents, whilst his wife rejects them because they have not the *particule*, or because their grandfathers have been in trade. We

Restaurant and Home Hospitality.

Seclusion of French-women.

Their Aristocratic Sentiments.

know that character, talent, culture, count for nothing whatever in the aristocratic estimate,[1] and we must remember that in France the spirit of aristocracy, where it exists, is extremely pure, and does not allow itself to be seduced from its own principles either by merit or wealth, nor even by such offices and honours as a republic can confer. It is not exactly convenient for me to give special instances, because these pages may be translated and the cases recognised, but I will say, speaking generally and without special application, that if M. de B. is the intimate friend of M. C., and if the two call each other Jules and Jacques, it does not at all follow that Madame de B. will recognise Madame C., or allow their children to associate.

Social Separation of the Sexes.

There is really very little necessity for this kind of *morgue* in France, as the French are not pushing, and care very little about distinguishing themselves by having fine acquaintances. It might be more necessary in England, where people are proud to know a lord, yet in England I have not observed that extreme difference between the sexes which certainly exists in France. I should say that in England, as a rule, a man and his wife, in whatever rank, will either repel you or accept you together. You would hardly, in England, be on terms of affectionate friendship with a man, and on terms of the most formal and distant acquaintanceship with his wife—acquaintanceship remaining equally formal, equally distant, for an unlimited number of years.

Less of it in England.

This distance between the sexes does not diminish in provincial France. I am not speaking of the great cities

Distance does not diminish.

[1] Of course I mean with reference to aristocratic rank. A duke who has talent of his own is likely to recognise it in others.

like Lyons and Marseilles, which may have something of Parisian openness and ease, but of the country and especially of the aristocratic parts of it. I should say that if there is any perceptible change it is rather towards a still wider separation of the sexes. The French have a very keen sense, perhaps an exaggerated sense, of what is feminine and what is unfeminine. Englishmen of the last generation were French in their feelings about this; they would have considered it unfeminine for a woman to make political speeches, to deliver sermons, to be a leader in the Salvation Army, and to press for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. They would even have thought it unfeminine to want a grand classical and mathematical education. All that feeling of objection to the "unfeminine" is essentially French, and it remains in France whilst in England it is passing away. I remember talking to some French people about George Eliot's extensive education. It did not exalt her in their eyes, but the contrary; they thought it unfeminine. There is a partial reaction against this opinion in France, of which one symptom is the establishment of *lycées* for girls; but it is only one party, and but a section of that party, which advocates this, and the real object is not so much to educate girls as to deliver them from clerical domination. All the tendencies of modern amusements and occupations separate men and women in France. As examples I may mention the increase of smoking and gambling, and the decline of conversation and dancing. The increase of smoking has the effect of leaving men together after dinner "to smoke a cigarette." In former times they went to the drawing-room with the ladies, and looked upon the English as boors for doing otherwise.

The Dislike to what is "Unfeminine"

Essentially French.

Education of French Girls.

Further Separation of Men and Women.

Now, under pretext of a cigarette, Frenchmen will remain away from ladies almost the whole evening. The increase of gambling makes the card-table more interesting than feminine small talk. Young Frenchmen are now becoming too old, too *blasés*, to enjoy dancing, which is one of the pleasures of healthy and natural youth. As to conversation, it is difficult to maintain it with ladies in a country where they have such a small share in the political and religious opinions of men, and where literature has little interest for either. In Paris there are the theatres, and the Salon whilst it is open. Perhaps the best subject in common between men and women in modern France is business, for which the women often have a natural aptitude.

The Want of Amusement in France.

The great want in French provincial life is amusement of a cheap and innocent kind, that might bring people together. The men have their *cafés*, but they are only frequented by one sex, and not universally by that. The clergy, of course, avoid them, and so do the gentry who pretend to some degree of rank. They are frequented by the middle, including the professional, classes; and the very existence of *cafés* is evidence of the small amount of intercourse going on in private houses. They are at the same time an effect and a cause of the separation of the sexes. So far as I know, the upper classes are more sociable in the sense of having more intercourse amongst themselves than the middle, but they are exclusive, and even amongst the richer nobles I doubt if there is as much hospitality as in England.

The *Cafés*.

Balls and Theatres.

An idea is prevalent in England that Frenchwomen are constantly going to balls and theatres. In Paris, no doubt, rich women have these amusements, but in the provinces,

where most French people live, there is very little of them. The provincial town that is best known to me is situated in an aristocratic neighbourhood, and although the theatre is very pretty and very well kept, the gentry will not patronise it at all, and are never to be seen there. Even the middle classes are by no means regular in their attendance, for the actors often play to empty benches. There are never any public balls, and those in private houses are very rare. The only public entertainments patronised in any way by the upper classes are the charity concerts, which occur perhaps twice in three years.

Rarity of Public Amusements.

Lunch.

The English institution of lunch, to which any friend may come uninvited, is a great practical help to social intercourse in the country. It is pleasant from the absence of state and pretension, both in host and guest, and it gives a convenient excuse for paying a long call in the middle of the day. There is nothing answering to it in France. You must be very intimate indeed with a French family before you could venture to "*demander à déjeuner;*" in fact, that is hardly possible without relationship. It is astonishing, to an Englishman, how very much of French social intercourse is absolutely limited to the formal call between three and six in the afternoon. People go on calling upon each other in that way for all their lives without an invitation on either side.

The Formal Call.

Another great difference between France and England concerns invitations to sleep. In England, all your friends' houses are open to you. It would not occur to an Englishman to go to the hotel in a town where he had intimate friends. In France the narrowness of town lodgings acts as an effectual preventive to this kind of hospitality, except amongst the very rich, and so the

Invitations to sleep.

habit of it is lost. This is one of those small matters which have great consequences. The most unrestrained social intercourse in England takes place when guests are staying in a house, and the most valuable moments for the interchange of masculine confidences occur very late at night.

Increase of Luxury an Impediment to Hospitality.

I have said elsewhere that the increase of luxury in France acts as a restraint upon hospitality. People shrink from the disturbance, the trouble, and the expense of the state dinner, and so they end by giving no dinners at all. In former times hospitality was more a thing of the heart than of the purse, more of gaiety than ceremony, and was so common as to be a weekly, and in some houses almost a daily habit. Now it is a solemn function occurring at rare intervals.

Want of Intercourse amongst the French Peasantry.

My attention has been drawn by the French themselves to the decline of hospitality amongst the peasantry. I believe that this varies greatly in different parts of France. So far as I have been able to observe, the peasants never invite each other except to marriage-feasts, and then their hospitality is excessive and extravagant. In my neighbourhood, not only do the peasants abstain from invitations, they do not even meet for an evening's chat in each other's houses. The farmhouses may be a mile from each other by measurement; socially, they are a hundred miles apart.

The Club and the *Cercle*.

The club is, in a certain sense, a more sociable institution in France than in England. It exists in France for conversation and gambling, in England for the individual convenience of the members who may want a rest in an easy-chair with a newspaper or a review, or who desire a convenient place for dining in a kind of

semi-privacy. The purpose of the English club is answered in some degree by the cafés and restaurants in France. They have no privacy, but they are to be found everywhere. The difference of title between "club" and "*cercle*" is an indication in itself. "Club" implies an association to meet common expenses for individual convenience, *cercle* is a circle of talkers.

Effects of Religious and Political Bigotry.

The effects of religious and political bigotry in restricting social intercourse are lamentable enough in both countries, and especially because the more intercourse is needed the less it is likely to take place. Real toleration of differences in opinion is possible only for a few. It comes from largeness of mind, but there are few large minds. It is dictated by the highest reason, but few people are reasonable. The ordinary and practical social solution of the difficulty is to break off intercourse when differences of opinion manifest themselves. In this way it comes to pass, almost involuntarily, and as if by the operation of a natural law, that people who visit together have usually the same political and religious opinions, or, at least, profess them, which is equally conducive to harmony. And the few who have true liberality of sentiment, and could bear with the gentle and considerate expression of a different opinion, are often compelled to adopt the usual custom that they may not have to resent rudeness.

Internal Division in France and England.

So it happens that people in the same nation are divided even more trenchantly than if they belonged to different nations, and you find English people who will receive Catholic foreigners but not an English dissenter, or French people who will receive Americans but not a French republican. The evil resulting from this increases with the smallness of the place. In London and Paris it

condemns nobody to solitude, because every one may find others who agree with him, but in provincial towns where petty class distinctions restrict people already to a very limited circle they may find themselves entirely shut out from social intercourse if they are even suspected of holding opinions not tolerated there. A want of delicacy and of hospitable feeling may even permit people to attack the known opinions of a guest at their own table, a proceeding not unexampled in civilised countries, though it would be thought barbarous in the tent of a nomadic Arab. Or, without going so far as that, a host, in mere weakness, may fail to defend his guest because it would be impossible to do that without establishing the forbidden principle that every one has a right to his own views.

Effects of Division in the Provinces.

# PART VIII

# SUCCESS

# CHAPTER I

## PERSONAL SUCCESS

THE estimate of what constitutes personal success varies so much in the two countries, and in the different classes of each, that it is very difficult to arrive at any common standard. There is hardly any kind of success that a French gentleman desires and which is at the same time possible for him. He cannot desire success in trade, or even in any lucrative profession, because all the trades and professions are beneath him; his former possibilities of success lay in Court favour, but now there is no Court. It is *bon ton* to despise official posts under the Republic. The gentry do not enter the Church, except occasionally the regular orders, and therefore cannot look for bishoprics. The fine arts and professional work in literature are of course infinitely beneath them. Nothing remains but the army and navy, with the drawback that both of these are already crowded with plebeian ability.

Success difficult for a French Gentleman.

A class that has nothing to look forward to in life, nothing to aim at, but only to live from day to day in dignity, often on very narrow means, is deprived of the possibilities of success, and cannot really know the delightful meaning of the word. The middle classes know it,—the shopkeepers, manufacturers, professional men.

Success in the Middle Classes.

Even the peasant knows it when he has fought his way to the purchase of a little farm.

Middle-class French-women.

The women in the French middle classes, as is well known, often understand business quite as well as the men, and show quite as much energy, and govern great commercial houses with quite as much capacity both for large affairs and for details. Madame Boucicaut, of the *Bon Marché* in Paris, will probably remain the typical Frenchwoman of business of this century. She attained undeniable greatness, not merely as the possessor of I know not how many millions, but as an untitled queen actually reigning over a great number of human beings and constantly applying a most powerful intellect to answer one question satisfactorily, "How can I do most good to all these people who work for me?" A lower nature would have tried to get above the shopkeeping sphere; her ambition was satisfied with remaining where she was and being a great worker and a great philanthropist.[1] Her life was indeed a success, not only in the exercise of power, but in the development of character. It has sometimes appeared possible that studious philanthropy may have its origin in a kind of remorse. In the case of Madame Boucicaut it may have been at first suggested by regret for the injury done to

Madame Boucicaut.

An untitled Queen.

A true Success.

[1] The public knows something of Madame Boucicaut's acts of public beneficence (though they were so numerous that it is impossible to remember such a list), but I have learned through several different private channels how thoughtful her kindness was to individuals. By long practice she had become quite an artist in goodness, having cultivated her talent in that way as another might have learned to paint or to sing. There was an inventiveness about her beneficence that made it as original as poetry, and as beautiful in its originality.

An Artist in Goodness.

thousands of petty tradesmen by a colossal cheap establishment like hers.

The influence of ancient philosophies, and also that of Christianity (so far as it has been taken seriously), have both been hostile to money-making; but the influence of all visible realities is so constantly in its favour that the word "success" in the middle classes both of France and England means money and nothing else. The phrases "*Il a réussi, il est arrivé*," and the expressions "He has done well, he has risen in the world," do not mean that one has attained any ideal excellence, but simply that he has netted money, and in certain classes a man is considered a poor creature if he has not realised a fortune. This view of success has led, especially in France, to increased gambling in all kinds of speculations, because there is hardly any kind of real work that a man or woman can do which brings in more than a pittance. The increased cost of living, both in necessary expenditure and in the useless expenditure that is imposed by the foolish customs of society, has made the payment for honest work seem even smaller than it really is. The desire for a little money is an incentive to work; the desire for much is an incentive to speculation, except in the few cases where there is capital enough for one to become a leader of industry on a large scale. The same cause has led to the success of lotteries in France. and it is this spirit which of late years has so much increased the amount of private gambling. These tendencies are not likely to diminish, since professional incomes, instead of increasing, have gone down as a result of competition. Physicians tell me that the facilities of cheap general and professional education are

Success in Money-making.

Speculation in France.

The Desire for Little and for Much Money.

Lotteries in France.

Private Gambling.

Crowding of the French Medical Profession.

now overcrowding their professions by an immense influx of young men who settle anywhere, as birds do where they are likely to find food. An old physician who formerly had a good rural practice in a part of the country very little known, told me that he was now surrounded by active young doctors in the adjacent parishes, and saw his income reduced to £160 a year. Yes, that is about the figure to which competition is bringing down the gains in the liberal professions. The fine arts, both in England and France, offer a few very valuable prizes; and as a few artists live very luxuriously and with considerable ostentation in their showy houses, they give a false idea of the prosperity of their profession. As a matter of fact, the majority of artists form a peculiarly and especially anxious class, whose gains are so precarious that next year's income is like the hope of a prize in a lottery. Nothing is more curious in the history of the nineteenth century than the prodigious increase in the number of artists both in England and France. A well-known French painter told me there were twenty thousand of his profession in Paris, working, of course, chiefly for exportation, as France produces painting to sell rather than to keep. The number of sculptors, though not nearly so great, is even more remarkable, because sculpture is so little bought. An English academician has an interesting theory about the intentions of Nature with regard to the fine arts; he says that pictures are produced now as coal was in prehistoric times, to serve long afterwards for fuel. Seriously, it appears that Nature follows in this matter her usual principle of "a thousand seeds for one to bear." She produces a thousand workmen in the fine arts that there may be found amongst

The Fine Arts as a Profession.

Great Numbers of Artists.

The Intentions of Nature.

them a single artist of genius whose work is truly precious to the world. In France the great number of semi-artists has had the effect of infusing an artistic element into several of the handicrafts, and of disseminating artistic ideas, chiefly amongst the population of Paris. Artists who have failed as makers of pictures or statues fall back upon decorative painting or sculpture, upon designing for manufactures, and upon teaching elementary drawing in public schools. Painters often have recourse to another of the graphic arts when painting fails. There is hardly one of the French etchers who has not desired to be a painter.

Uses of the Unsuccessful.

From the point of view which regards worldly success, and which we are considering for the present, the French clergy is very inferior to the English. The highest pay of a parish priest is sixty pounds a year, the lowest thirty-six. There are some extras for wedding and funeral fees. There is also a priest's house, and these dwellings have been much improved of late. When the parishioners are rich and generous the priest receives many presents of eatables, and in some parishes his cellar is kept well supplied with wine; but when the population is stingy he has to live strictly on his income, or even on less if he is of a charitable disposition. In towns, a favourite priest is often embarrassed with gifts for the comfort and elegance of his rooms; in rural parishes his rooms are likely to be bare. Each priest keeps one woman servant, usually plain, and, of course, invariably of mature age—his "rancid virgin," as one *curé* wittily called her. It has always been an insoluble problem for me how the two manage to live so decently on so little money. A canon has sixty pounds a year, a bishop four hundred, and an

Small Worldly Success of the French Clergy.

Presents given to Priests.

French Canons.

Prelates.

archbishop six hundred, but in the case of prelates there is the *casuel* (different fees), which may increase their means considerably. In England the lowest ecclesiastical incomes are twice what they are in France, and the highest more than ten times as much. There are no *prizes* in the French Catholic Church answering to the richer English livings; even a bishopric (from the pecuniary point of view) is not so good as many an English rectory. We hear of the wealth and splendour of the Church; she is, no doubt, magnificent in display, but her priests are poor officials, and their celibacy is not a matter of choice but of necessity, which (from a sense of prudence) has been converted into a rule. It is only after fully realising the poverty of the Catholic priesthood that we can estimate the overwhelming importance of the Pope with his unlimited command of money. The difference between him and his prelates is not at all that between an English king and his great nobles, but rather that between the Emperor Napoleon and ordinary regimental officers, whilst the priests are relatively in the position of private soldiers and no more.

Poverty of the Catholic Priesthood.

Importance of the Pope.

Ecclesiastical Incomes in England.

In England ecclesiastical incomes range between eighty pounds a year and fifteen thousand. Incomes of two or three hundred a year are common, and many exceed seven or eight. In fact, the Church answers with tolerable exactness to other liberal professions, such as medicine, the law, and painting. A splendidly successful lawyer, doctor, or painter has the income of the Archbishop of York, and there may be one in each generation with that of Canterbury, whilst the unsuccessful layman may equal the earnings of a small incumbent or a poor curate, and between the two we find all the degrees. It

is more difficult, however, for an energetic man to make his own way in the Church than in more open professions.

The army, in both countries, is a poor profession except in the highest grades. It is essentially a bachelor's profession. In France, officers are not permitted to marry any woman who has less than a certain dowry, and in England marriage is restricted to a few amongst the private soldiers.[1] Here we have an approach to the enforced celibacy of the Roman priesthood.

The Army a Bachelor's Profession.

Almost all public offices in France are paid, but ill paid. In England they are either well paid or gratuitous. English Members of Parliament, in both houses, are unpaid; in France they receive a moderate salary. In England magistrates (except a small special class) are unpaid; in France they all receive a few thousand francs a year. On the other hand, English judges are splendidly paid in comparison with French judges, even when they sit only in the County Courts. The magistracy, in France, is so little lucrative that judicial functions usually imply private means.

Public Offices in France and England.

The Magistracy.

The ordinary trades are perhaps equally lucrative in the two countries, and, with the exception of old land-owners, most of the prosperous people are either trades-

Trade.

[1] In any case a French officer cannot marry without an authorisation emanating from the Ministry of War. A military friend told me that the following mishap occurred to an officer in his regiment who thought he would like to marry a certain girl in a certain town. He applied for permission, which was refused. The regiment was sent elsewhere, and the sensitive officer was smitten a second time, so he applied for permission again. It came in the form of an authorisation to marry not the second, but the first young lady. The officer did so, and discovered, when too late, that she was one of those governing women who order about their husbands like children, so he has leisure to deplore the decision of the authorities.

men or the descendants of tradesmen. An antiquary in a certain neighbourhood told me that the local aristocracy there was descended, almost exclusively, from tanners of the Middle Ages. In the wine districts gold is chiefly consolidated, directly or indirectly, from grape-juice, as in Lancashire it is a concentrated form of cotton, and in Lyons of silk. Many fine new houses have been built in France since the Empire, and almost invariably by tradesmen.

The English Manufacturing District.

For rapid increase in wealth and population there is nothing in France comparable to the manufacturing district within a radius of forty miles from the Manchester Exchange. The population of that region is greater than that within forty miles of Charing Cross; and notwithstanding times of depression it is probable that the wealth in it far exceeds that of any similar area in France.

Manchester.

Manchester, and the congeries of minor yet still populous towns that crowd round it, are an example of rapidity in the increase of wealth and population together which is rather American than European, and there, at least, an American would find proofs of material success. I, who have lived in Lancashire, have known many surprising instances, and it is not so much this or that particular example that strikes one there as the prevalence of a plutocratic atmosphere. Money is as much in the air of Lancashire as the smell of flowers about Cannes and Nice, with this difference, that whilst flowers are delightful to most noses, the odour of money is so chiefly to those who possess it.

A Plutocratic Atmosphere.

The reader may perhaps imagine that small professional incomes must be relatively larger in France than in England because living is cheaper there, but these

ideas are founded upon a former state of things. Before the Second Empire, when there were few railways, living was very cheap in some out-of-the-way parts of France. Railways equalised prices, and since then various other causes have combined to raise them. At present, living is quite as expensive in France as in England. An Englishman, now settled in Kent after a residence in Burgundy, tells me that he finds it more economical to live in his own country. At the same time that prices have risen, the customs of society have become both more exacting and more costly, so that married people feel what has been called "the pinch of poverty" on means that would have seemed an ample competence to their fathers. The one conclusion to which accumulated experience seems now to be driving mankind is that without a large income there can be no success, and that a man's life is a failure unless he can afford to live in society, to travel, and to provide handsomely for all the members of his family.

Cost of Living in France and England.

Necessity of a large Income.

Another estimate of success is held by some, and I think by more people in France than in England. It is, and always has been, my own view, and I have never seen any reason to change it.

Real success is nothing more, and it is certainly nothing less, than the happy exercise and development of each man's faculties, whatever they may be. Hence the error of supposing that one can be truly successful by following in the steps of another. Each man has to win his own happiness, or, in religious language, to work out his own salvation. The world's estimate of him is important only just so far as it enables him to do this, or hinders him from doing it; beyond that it is no more to

Real Success.

him than the wind on a distant sea. Now, this happy exercise of gifts may no doubt sometimes depend on money, but it usually depends far more on suitableness of situation. I have mentioned the poor incomes of French priests, the miserable incomes as they will appear to the English reader. The very poverty of these men is, in the best cases, a part of their success. If they want to leave all and follow Christ, a bare subsistence is all that they require for that. Their poverty is a part of the dignity and reality of their office. Success, for a priest, has absolutely nothing to do with money, or even with preferment; it consists in moral and religious influence, and in nothing else. The famous *Curé d'Ars* had immense success, and remained a poor village priest to the end of his saintly life; what need had he of wealth and dignities? In the army, as elsewhere, success is to be fit for the rank one occupies, and to attain exactly the rank that one is fit for; it is not to get up into a rank above one's capacity. In literature, success is merely encouragement to express our genuine and best selves; it is not to be splendidly rewarded for producing work adapted for the market. In painting, success is nothing more than encouragement to paint the pictures that form themselves in the mind; it is not successful commerce. Corot, the French landscape painter, produced his own work and succeeded late, yet it was a pure success for him, and he could wait for it patiently on fifty pounds a year. Another instance of real though not apparent success is that of the Englishman David Cox, whom some have commiserated because he did not pocket the thousands that his drawings afterwards attained. One who knew him intimately said there was no occasion for

The true Success of a Priest.

Corot.

Cox.

pity, that Cox had enjoyed his life and work, and earned as much as was necessary for his independence.

There are two sides to the question whether a successful life must be in every case a pleasant one. The Epicurean philosopher would say that without happiness there can be no success; the Stoic would see the possibility of a high kind of success without anything like happiness; the Christian thinks life successful if it leads to heaven, though it be wretched and miserable upon earth. Both Christian and Epicurean agree in taking happiness as the measure of success, though one places it on the earth and the other elsewhere.

Epicurean and Stoic Views of Success.

All three are to be found in France in their complete development. The dominant philosophy is the Epicurean, but Stoicism and Christianity have their small and great places with their own theories of success. It is the tendency of the French mind to follow every scheme of life to the extremity of its logical consequences. France is the country of the woman of the world, *la mondaine*, and of the Carmelite nun, the one living in the utmost luxury, the other in the hardest austerity, and a gleam of hope or a cloud of disappointment in the life of a young lady may determine for her which of the two she is to be. France is the country of conversation and of the silent trappists, the land of wine, and dance, and song, yet at the same time a land where life is often most dull, and dreary, and prosaic.

Strong Contrasts in France.

Still, if we consider the French nation broadly, after having given its due place to asceticism, catholic or parsimonious, I think it is evident that the dominant tendency is to make the present life agreeable, even to study to make it so, and to take trouble in order to enjoy

French Tendency to make Life Agreeable.

a succession of little pleasures. In the care for the agreeableness of the present life there is a very strong contrast between the French and the Highlanders of Scotland, for example. The Highlanders are unsuccessful in making life agreeable, partly on account of their climate, which discourages effort, but also from their temperament, which prefers discomfort to trouble and forethought. The same contrast, in minor degrees, exists between the French and some other inhabitants of the British Islands.

Life as a Succession of little Pleasures.

The Frenchman's object is to make life *a succession of little pleasures.*

The Judicious Epicurean.

If he is able to do this, does that constitute success? It is success of a kind, if it can be carried on indefinitely and without any perceptible injury to health. The judicious Epicurean, who knows the necessity of moderation, arrives at a kind of happiness, and he includes mental pleasures, such as those of art and elegance, in his list.

The Natural Refreshers of Human Life.

Whether a life of little pleasures is a successful life or not, it seems plain that, from the simply rational point of view, a life of *felt* privations is a failure. The ordinary gifts of nature are sunlight, pure air, pure water, and some degree of natural beauty. These are the natural refreshers of human life, and without them it is impossible for it to be complete. The establishment of the industrial system is not a true success, because it has deprived great populations of these benefits. In this sense Manchester and Lyons are unsuccessful; they have not solved the problem of healthy and pleasant existence. Paris is apparently successful, because there is much external brilliance, if not beauty, but when we come to examine Parisian life in its details we find that it is wanting in

Manchester and Lyons.

Paris.

space and freedom, that only the rich have elbow-room, and that ordinary existence is fatiguing as well as narrow. Londoners are rather more at ease, as their town covers more territory; but it is a dismal place, and if its inhabitants never left it they would not know the natural colour of the sky, or that of a flowing river. Dismal London.

If we compare the two countries, the most successful quiet life, with moderate expenditure and some enjoyment of unspoiled nature, combined with the conveniences of advanced civilisation, is to be found, I think, in the French provinces. There is, however, a drawback to that success, otherwise unquestionably considerable, in the intellectual dulness which afflicts French provincial life as with a kind of torpor. There is nothing in the French provinces answering to the intelligence of the English manufacturing districts, with their mechanics' institutes, their lectures, concerts, and picture exhibitions. Dulness of French Provincial Life.

In Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire people are scarcely more cut off from the intelligent world than if they lived at a short distance from a metropolis. That perfect life which is so difficult to attain in modern times would require the union of natural beauty (including unsullied skies and healthy vegetation) with intellectual society and opportunities. Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The question may be simplified by remembering that although public success may be measured by outward results, private success is always strictly personal, and is to be measured, at any particular time, only by the good mental and bodily condition of the man himself. All else is merely external. Public and Private Success.

A good mental condition includes just as much culture as is necessary to the development of the faculties, but not any burden of erudition heavy Mental Condition.

enough to diminish (as erudition so often does) the promptitude or the elasticity of the mind. A good bodily condition includes health and the training which gives a similar promptitude and elasticity. Sufficient material well-being for the maintenance of body and mind in these favourable conditions is essential to true success, all beyond it is superfluous. Fame, or the opinion of others, is of no use except as an encouragement or a stimulus, and it has nothing to do with the reality of success.

Bodily Condition.

Fame.

Industrial Civilisation.

On applying these tests to our modern industrial civilisation we find evidences of failure on all hands. The poor are not in conditions of existence favourable to the body, and they have not leisure enough for the activities of the mind. The rich leaders of industry have far more wealth than would be necessary to perfect human life, but they have not enough leisure for intellectual attainments; and they are prevented, by the presence of the multitudes that industry has called into being, from leading a life independent of great social cares. In short, from the purely human and private point of view, without reference to material results, industrialism has not hitherto proved itself a success. It is successful in the produce of commodities, but not in the government of life.

Not a Complete Success.

Cheerfulness.

Mere cheerfulness of disposition is an element in every private success, and it might be argued that if any one is cheerful, say in the horrible English "Black Country," he is living more successfully than a despondent spirit surrounded by the light and colour of Italy. The French consider themselves happier than the English because they have more external gaiety, but I do not accept this gaiety as

External Gaiety of the French.

good evidence of a happy life. Without looking upon it with any puritanical disapproval, I think it is very frequently no more than a reaction against the troubles that beset human existence everywhere, and of which the French, like others, have their share. A gay philosophy may seem wanting in seriousness, but a man must have a very superficial acquaintance with French people if he has not discovered that their gaiety often conceals many a private anxiety and care. One reason for it is the feeling, which is certainly healthy, that we ought not to trouble other people with private causes of sadness, but make an effort to be cheerful as a social duty. Another and a deeper reason is that a light philosophy seems wiser and more intelligent than a melancholy one, because the miseries of life are not worth dwelling upon unless they can be practically alleviated. The natural gravity of Englishmen causes them to be misunderstood in France, where it is taken for sadness. English gravity is not incompatible with happiness. The grave mind is happy in its gravity as the light mind in its levity; and the English are not so grave as the French believe them to be. Cheerfulness (a word for which there is no equivalent in the French language) is an English characteristic, though the English have not the champagne in the blood that bubbles up in merriment and nonsense on the top of a Frenchman's brain. They had it long ago, in Shakespeare's time.

French Gaiety on the Surface.

Wisdom of a light Philosophy.

English Gravity not Incompatible with Happiness.

## CHAPTER II

### NATIONAL SUCCESS AT HOME

Private National Success.

THERE is a private national success as well as a public one. Private success, for a nation, is to have got the kind of religion and the kind of government that are suitable to the national idiosyncrasy, to have sufficient wealth and at the same time a light burden of taxation,

Conditions of it.

to be free from civil discord of any dangerous acuteness, to pursue the arts and sciences fruitfully, and to live without dread of an enemy.

Which of the two, France or England, has hitherto reached the highest point of success in these several ways?

On the subject of religion and government enough has been said already in this volume. I think it is clear that on these important points England has been the

Religion.

more successful nation of the two. The Gallican Church was a failure, it has had to give way to Ultramontanism; the Anglican Church has been a great success, it has not only preserved, it has intensified its national character. It is true that Anglicanism is surrounded by Dissent; but Romanism is only suited to a part of the French people, and lives in opposition to its guiding secular principles. England has also enjoyed a more complete political

success than France. Her system of government has not, as yet, excluded or alienated any class. Patricians and plebeians sit in the same Cabinet, speak from the same platforms, appeal to the same public in the same ways, and that whether they are Conservative or Radical. In England a popular leader may be associated with great nobles and received by the Sovereign; in France he would not be recognised by the smallest aristocrat. No Frenchman with any pretensions to aristocracy would be seen on the same platform with a French Gladstone. The French "Conservatives" have not the faintest hope of forming a Cabinet so long as the Republic lasts. To them the Republican power is like a foreign occupation, and their only hope is to plot against it and enfeeble it; for them it is not a national, but only a party government. All that can be said of the internal success of France, from the political point of view, is that since the overthrow of the Paris Commune she has maintained both liberty and order. No previous French Government has ever maintained *both*. The Republic has done this, but without being able to effect any reconciliation between parties which live in a state of latent civil war. The English system of government is accepted by the whole nation; it is national; whereas the French system is accepted by a part of the nation, and is national only in the sense of having the majority on its side.

Government.

Divisions in France.

Partial Success of the Republic.

The subject of wealth has been treated in another chapter. It is not wealth that is wanting. Both nations are enormously rich, France having the advantage of a more even distribution, England the advantage, if it is one, of possessing a greater number of prodigiously rich men.

Wealth.

Taxation.

With regard to taxation, both countries inherit vast debts accumulated by previous wars. The Franco-German War cost France altogether about as much as England had to pay for the great contest with Napoleon the First. Taxation is heavier in France, and every year there is a deficit. Even if the present peace were to continue indefinitely, it is so costly that French finances must succumb beneath the strain of it. The difference between the two nations is that England can go on indefinitely as she is living now, in times of peace, whilst France cannot. A great conflict for national existence might utterly ruin both. Imagine an additional debt, for each, of a thousand millions sterling, the possible cost of the next European war!

Difference between English and French Finances.

Freedom from Civil Discord.

The next condition that I mentioned as essential to national happiness was freedom from civil discord of any dangerous acuteness. Now, although the French have shown considerable, even admirable self-restraint since 1871, so that civil war has never broken out amongst them in spite of much suppressed excitement, I think it is evident that there has been, and that there is yet, much less danger of civil war in England. Such an evil is still possible in France, though with the present orderly French temper it is not probable; in England, during this century at least, it seems absolutely out of the question. Civil discord exists in France to the degree of dangerous acuteness, in England only to the degree that makes it bitter and unpleasant. French political dissension leads to personal rancour, which is constantly breaking forth in insults and in duels; in England the forms of courtesy between parties are still in some measure preserved. If a distinguished English statesman dies, or is seriously ill,

English Courtesy.

his opponents express and feel regret for his loss, or sympathy with his sufferings; but French political hatred follows a man even to the grave. In a word, Frenchmen of opposite political tenets are really enemies; Englishmen who sit opposite to each other in the House are political adversaries only, and may meet pleasantly at the same dinner-table.

French Political Hatred.

The superior amenity of English public life is clear proof of its more successful working. It shows that both parties have something in common—their country—and that they do not lose sight of the national welfare, though they differ as to the measures supposed to be most conducive to it.

My next point was that a successful nation would pursue the arts and sciences fruitfully. Both France and England may look back with satisfaction to all that has been done during the last fifty years. There has been absolutely no sign in either country of decadence, notwithstanding frequent self-depreciation. Of the scientific progress that has been made I will say little, from simple incompetence to deal with a subject so vast and so much beyond my grasp. I only know, as an ignorant yet interested spectator, that hardly any enterprise now seems to be too great for the intelligence of English and French engineers, or for the skill of the workmen whom they direct. If they do not build pyramids greater than those of Egypt and hippodromes more substantial than the Coliseum, it is only because there is no demand for them. Ours is the age of communication, and here England takes the lead with her railways, France with her admirable system of common roads and her complete inland navigation. France has made the Suez Canal,

The Arts and Sciences.

Applied Science.

has attacked Panama, and is looking forward to a ship canal from Paris to the sea. Lancashire is making Manchester a seaport, and Scotland is bridging over the Firth of Forth. A gigantic project for a bridge from Dover to Calais is on the list of things that French engineers consider possible. It is difficult to state fairly what has been contributed by each country to the improvement of the railway and the telegraph; it is plain, however, that the practical art of railway travelling first originated in England. The first balloon rose in French air, and a balloon was for the first time successfully steered in France. The French are generally a little ahead of the English in military inventions, as in the use of breech-loading cannon and improved rifles and gunpowder, as well as other explosives, and now in the strength and perfection of armour-plating. Almost all the improvements in scientific agriculture are of English origin, and so are the machines used in it which are now extensively sold in France. Whilst the English are the greater maritime nation of the two and have an incomparably larger carrying trade, improvements in shipbuilding have usually originated either with the French or the Americans. In the construction of pleasure-boats, the English are ahead of the French for sea-going yachts (though inferior to the Americans), but the French with their great rivers have studied and brought to perfection the small centre-board sloop which tacks rapidly.

Railways.

Balloons.

Military Inventions.

Agriculture.

Ship-building.

Pleasure-boats.

I am not a good judge of any kind of manufacture except those connected with literature or the fine arts, so I will pass by the cottons of Manchester and the silks of Lyons with the simple observation that Lancashire has produced the spinning jenny and Lyons the Jacquard

Manu-factures.

loom. With regard to the printing of newspapers and books, which I understand better, the French are admirable in the exquisite, but their common work is not so good as the English. French *éditions de bibliophile*, such as those of Lemerre, Jouaust, Tross, and the Société de Saint Augustin, not to mention many publications by Quantin and others, are equal to the best work of English printers in the mechanical qualities of type-cutting and clearness of impression, whilst they are, I think, a little superior to it in taste. All the French *éditions de bibliophile* that I possess or have examined are scrupulously correct in their freedom from typographic errors, whilst with common French editions it is just the contrary. There is a very well known Parisian publishing house that issues an immense quantity of volumes so rich in typographic faults that no English publisher would own them; yet ordinary French readers, who are very inattentive and also very patient, either do not notice or do not object to them. The fact is that there are two distinct classes of book-buyers in France—*les amateurs* and *le vulgaire*. The first are hard to please, and will have nothing to do with ugly or faulty editions, whilst they will give any price for exquisitely perfect work; the second neither know nor care anything about the matter, and in producing for them it does not signify how bad the work may be, provided only that the price does not exceed three francs fifty centimes per volume. The carelessness of the French about cheap work used to be very conspicuous in their newspapers, but these have improved during the last decade. I well remember the time when it was almost impossible to find a single English name or quotation, however brief, correctly printed in a French

Printing.

French *Éditions de Bibliophile.*

Common French Editions.

French Book-buyers.

French Carelessness about cheap Work.

newspaper. English critics always attributed these faults to the writers of the articles, but they were more frequently due to absolute carelessness in correcting.[1] The press-work, too, used to be disgraceful; it is now fairly good in the daily papers and excellent in the illustrated weeklies. France is not a good country for presentable editions at moderate prices. The two most popular poets—Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset—are not to be had in anything answering to the readable current editions of Tennyson. There are the big octavos and the little exquisite Elzevirs for amateurs, and the vulgar editions for the public.

Careless Correcting.

The Exquisite and the Vulgar.

This contrast between the exquisite and the vulgar is usually very strong in France. We find it in the most visible form in French painting, which leads us to the conclusion that art does not refine a nation, but only expresses, and expresses equally and indifferently, whatever natural refinement and whatever inborn coarseness and vulgarity may already be existing in the race. If all the refined work in a French *Salon* could be put into an exhibition by itself it would be delightful; but the *Salons* as they exist at present are quite as much an annoyance as an enjoyment. A student with plenty of physical energy may by sheer hard labour arrive at a kind of noisy performance which attracts attention to his name, but the delicate and tender spirit of true art is absent from such work. Painting having been understood in France very

Qualities of Painting in France.

[1] French carelessness in correcting is especially lamentable in school-books. I have before me a French school edition of *Childe Harold*, abounding in gross typographic blunders that must be most puzzling to French boys. M. Taine's *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* is very faulty in this respect.

much as a matter of apprenticeship, like the handicraft trades, all the technical part of it is taught by the straightest and surest methods to any lad who will be at the pains to go steadily through them, and the consequence is that a great number of men in France possess the handicraft without either intellectual culture or poetic invention, and it is they who have vulgarised the art. The English have been, and are still, inferior in manual force; they cannot attack a large canvas with the same certainty of covering it in a workmanlike manner, and some of their artists, like gifted amateurs, have not technical ability equal to the realisation of their ideas. Still there is less of coarseness in the English school, and more amenity and tenderness; its art is more gentle and nearer to poetry and music. There was a time when the French had such a horror of crude colouring that, to avoid it, they took refuge in dull grays and browns, but that time is now so completely past that the most glaring colours are admitted into the *Salon*. English painting, on the contrary, has become more sober than in the early days of uncompromising naturalism. An art critic who understood the English and French minds, and who was not himself turned aside from justice by the perversions of vulgar French or vulgar English patriotism, would probably say that, on the whole, the artists of both nations had been equally successful with regard to the interior of their own countries. As for foreign success, that is quite another thing, and I reserve it for the following chapter. At present I mean simply that English artists delight and instruct English people as much as French artists delight and instruct the French, and that the modern renaissance of the fine arts has been as

Qualities of English Art.

Crudity of Colour.

Home Success of Artists.

effectual, nationally, in one country as in the other. On the ground of pure merit (always without reference to foreign estimation) an impartial critic would probably say that there were more draughtsmen in France and more colourists in England. Technical comparisons are difficult, because the art of painting contains, in reality, several different arts according to the ways in which it is practised, and they cannot be compared with each other. The popular comparison of Landseer with Rosa Bonheur is foolish, because they have nothing in common. There is no English artist who might be profitably compared with Meissonier; he is comparable only with the Dutch. Several clever Frenchmen have taken up water-colour of late, and some of them have done interesting work; but not one of them has either the aims or the qualities of Turner. A comparison can be usefully established only between artists who paint the same class of subjects in the same technical manner. The comparison of Turner, as an oil-painter, with Claude is one that no intelligent critic would ever have made if Turner had not himself provoked it. Turner proved only that he could imitate Claude with a part of himself, as a very clever English Latinist might studiously imitate Virgil. The complete Turner is so much outside of Claude that the comparison stops short for want of material in the Frenchman.

Landseer and Rosa Bonheur.

Meissonier.

Turner and Claude.

The Revival of Etching.

The revival of etching, which has been the most remarkable phenomenon in the artistic history of our own time, has been common to England and France, but more vigorously pursued by Frenchmen. This is due to the great superabundance of young unemployed painters in France who are happy to turn to anything that does not compel them to abandon art. It is the

peculiarity of etching that men are better trained for it by the education of a painter than by the hard manual discipline of the engraver. Line engraving has now died out in England. In France it still maintains a feeble and precarious existence by the encouragement of the State (through the *Chalcographie du Louvre*) and a society of lovers of art who are trying to keep it alive. Line Engraving.

All the photographic processes for the reproduction of works of art have been carried to perfection sooner in France than in England, and France always keeps the lead. Photography, itself, is due to efforts made by Niepce for the production of engraved plates. Photographic Processes.

Literature is probably more influential in England than in France, because the English read so much more. A great proportion of the reading done in both countries is, however, only rest, or an escape from surrounding reality, so that it does little for the true success of authors, which is the dissemination of ideas. I do not know the name of any English author who has exercised so much direct power as either Rousseau or Voltaire. That of Carlyle is thought to have been considerable, because his personal energy was of the imperative order; but the English world does not follow his teaching. He was hostile to the fine arts, and they are more appreciated than ever; he condemned fiction, and novels were never more diligently read; he preferred despotism to popular government, and we see the rise of the English democracy; he was without scientific ideas, and science is penetrating all the departments of thought and action. The influence of John Mill is said to be great amongst thinking men in the English lower classes; but it is purely rational, and can awaken no enthusiasm beyond the disinterested love of Literature in the two Countries. Carlyle. John Mill.

Ruskin.

truth. Mr. Ruskin's influence on art has been powerful in praise, but feeble in condemnation. He did much for the fame of Turner, but little or nothing against Constable and Claude; and notwithstanding his open hostility to etching, that art is now better appreciated than ever. Contemporary artists go on their own paths without deference to critical advice. A more interesting and important subject is Mr. Ruskin's influence on working men. He appeals more to the feelings than Spencer or Mill, and is welcome to many wanderers in search of a moral authority and master. They like the strength of faith in the master himself, which is ready to carry theory into practice, even when the theory is ruinous. Matthew Arnold, though a poet, was more rational, cooler, less fitted for popular leadership. His influence was directly felt by cultivated readers only; but it will have consequences not always traceable to the source. I think he erred in taking certain things to be specially English which are only English forms of something to be found elsewhere. The best criticism of this mistake in Arnold was made by Herbert Spencer with reference to nonconformity.[1] And Arnold's celebrated division of the English

Matthew Arnold.

[1] "Mr. Arnold's studies of other nations, other ages, and other creeds would, I should have thought, have led him to regard Nonconformity as an universal power in societies, which has, in our time and country, its particular embodiment, but which is to be understood only when contemplated in all its other embodiments; the thing is one in spirit and tendency, whether shown amongst the Jews or the Greeks—whether in Catholic Europe or Protestant England. Wherever there is disagreement with a current belief, no matter what its nature, there is Nonconformity. The open expression of difference and avowed opposition to that which is authoritatively established constitutes Dissent, whether the religion be Pagan or Christian, Monotheistic or Polytheistic. The relative

into Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, though it throws a light upon the nation, has the defect of making it seem an English peculiarity to be so divided, whereas you find the same characteristics in the three great and very distinct French classes. The French aristocracy is more ignorant than the English, the French *bourgeoisie* more narrow in its concentration of thought upon money matters, and the populace less easily led and influenced by the possessors of wealth and culture. Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace.

Of Englishmen now living (1888), Mr. John Morley has the best equipment for a literary influence upon his countrymen; because he is at the same time a born writer and a man versed in affairs. Unfortunately a political career like his must have the effect of limiting a writer's influence to a single political party. John Morley might be useful to all Englishmen at the present time because he unites complete intellectual freedom with a vigorous moral sense. In this he is the Englishman of the future, the Englishman who will be intellectually emancipated, yet who will preserve the moral sense of his forefathers and hate, let us hope, as they did, "that horrid burden and impediment on the soul," as Morley describes it, "which the Churches call Sin, and which, by whatever name we call it, is a very real catastrophe in the moral nature of man." J. Morley.

Of the literary influences which consist chiefly in giving æsthetic pleasure, that of poetry maintains itself more than was expected in the middle of the century, and it is better understood now than it was then that poetry Poetry.

attitudes of the Dissenter, and of those in power, are essentially the same in all cases, and in all cases lead to vituperation and persecution."—*The Study of Sociology*, ninth edition, p. 234.

must remain itself and not get entangled in the actual. A poet may, like Victor Hugo and William Morris, be in sympathy with advanced radicals, but in his verse he is likely to go back to the past as in the *Earthly Paradise* and the *Légende des Siècles*, or to pure mythology with Lewis Morris in the *Epic of Hades*, or to dim traditions as Tennyson to the Court of King Arthur, or even project himself into the future state like Sully Prudhomme in *Le Bonheur*.

Office of Poetry in the Modern World.

The office of poetry in the modern world is still its ancient office of deliverance. It delivers us from the actual by the imagination, and the older we get the less completely satisfactory does the actual become for us, and the more we need poetry to help us out of it. Those who do not read verses may receive their poetry through other channels. They may receive it in great purity and strength through religion, which is always successful in exact proportion to the sum of poetry that it contains, and unsuccessful in proportion to its rationalism. Or, if not consciously religious, men may get their poetry through music, architecture, and painting, of which it always was and always will be the mysterious vital principle, the immortal soul.

Victor Hugo.

The immense popularity of Victor Hugo was not so much due to the love of poetry in Frenchmen as to their gratitude for his fidelity to the popular cause, and admiration for his steady resistance to Napoleon III. Had he remained a royalist to the last, his fame would have been of a quieter kind. The French have a way of taking up a man and making political capital out of him, increasing his reputation as much as possible for that purpose. Hugo's name and his portraits were familiar to multitudes who knew nothing of his poetry. This deprives the

observer of what might have been otherwise a good opportunity for appreciating the degree of interest that the French take in poetry on its own account, but even without political popularity there remained Hugo's celebrity as a novelist. The case is a very complex one. Great vigour in old age is deeply respected and admired in France, and Hugo was a very fine old man. I am told that the generation now passing away took a much keener interest in literature than the present. As for poor Lamartine, his fame has been for a while completely eclipsed, but there are now some signs of a revival. Alfred de Musset is read by all French people of a literary turn, especially by young men, who delight in him as young Englishmen delighted in Byron before Tennyson became the fashion. The minor French poets of the present day are numerous, and the tendency amongst them is to a great perfection of technical finish, which is praiseworthy as a proof of labour and self-discipline. But it is the novelists and the playwrights who have the substantial success. They earn ten times more money than that hard-working man of genius, Balzac, would even have dreamed of as a possibility in his then wretched profession. There is a young school of philosophers, very sane and very sage, who are trying earnestly to win some nearer approach to the hidden truths of life and the universe, but they only reach the small intellectual class. Renan has literary qualities of the highest order, but like the majority of first-rate men of letters he is disgusted with the sight of practical politics, and more inclined to make the combatants a subject for sarcasm than to help them out of the sloughs they fall into, either on one side or the other. Practical influence with the pen appears

Lamartine.

Musset.

Young Philosophers.

Renan.

Journalists.

now to belong, in France, almost exclusively, to journalists, and they are constantly under the temptation to get up sensational excitements, to make a fuss, and convert every little crisis into a great one. As English journalism is anonymous, the writers cannot aspire to make themselves personally conspicuous, and are somewhat quieter. That which, in England, now answers in some degree to French journalism is review-writing with signed articles.

The Dread of War in England.

As for the dread of war, which is the most important of all drawbacks to national happiness, the inferiority of the English in land armies subjects them to occasional panics about the possibility of a French invasion, and has led them, as all know, to forbid the execution of the Channel Tunnel, though they would not have been more exposed by its means than the French to an English invasion. Since then, it has been conclusively proved that the use of the steam-engine in war-ships has made the offensive stronger than the defensive by permitting the choice of a landing-place, and therefore much of the former security of an insular kingdom has been taken away. The feeling that invasion was possible formerly afflicted only the timid, but now the bravest are fully aware that it is so, and sleep, like good watch-dogs, with an eye open.

The Dread of War in France.

The position of France is still more precarious. On both sides of a perfectly artificial frontier two armies have been watching each other for seventeen years as they watch for a night in war-time. The slightest imprudence of one or the other Government, even the zeal of some subordinate official, may at any moment precipitate that conflict which both alike look forward to, and which both nations equally dread. It is impossible, under such

circumstances, that life in France can be happy. The war cloud is perpetually visible on the eastern horizon. Sometimes it swells and covers half the sky and darkens the land with gloom, then it lessens and seems to be more distant, *but it never wholly disappears.*

## CHAPTER III

### NATIONAL SUCCESS ABROAD

THIS kind of success is of importance only so far as it affects the wealth or the independence of a nation. Otherwise, success abroad is merely a subject of national vanity of a very empty kind. It is not the same with nations as with individuals. Personal celebrity is really a legitimate object of ambition for a wise man, because it makes life pleasanter to him in various very practical ways, and especially by bringing him into contact with people interested in his own pursuits. There is no national reward of that kind. It matters nothing to the English people whether their authors and artists have a continental celebrity or not. We shall understand the subject better by considering, at first, the case of England separately, and her celebrity in France, for different achievements of genius and industry. Certainly, if English genius is visible in anything it is in poetry, yet no Englishman who knew the French would attach the slightest weight to their opinion on the English poets. They often know the language well enough to read prose of a clear and simple kind; I quite believe that some Frenchmen of cultivated taste may appreciate Addison's prose, or Goldsmith's prose, and a few, a very few, may

Vanity of National Success.

The French as Judges of English Verse.

perhaps enjoy some verses of Byron or Pope; but English blank verse is usually quite beyond French appreciation as to its technical qualities, and so indeed are the more delicate and subtle cadences of English rhymed metres such as those which occur, for example, in the "Lotos-Eaters." I should think it highly improbable that there are ten Frenchmen with ear enough to seize upon the very different qualities that artists so different as Milton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson can give to a metre, blank verse, which *appears* to be identical in the three cases, or who would know the difference between the heroic couplet as employed by Pope and the same measure in the hands of William Morris. There is the Spenserian stanza, too, as its inventor used it, and as it has been used by Thomson and Byron. Try to explain these differences, which in reality are enormous, to a Frenchman. Try to explain to him anything about the musical qualities of the English language. He will laugh at you for your "patriotism"; it being a received opinion in France that English never is and never can be musical. There is Vice-Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, for example, probably the most cultivated officer in the French navy, an Academician, a scholar, a charming and very instructive writer, altogether a man who would do honour to any nation. Of course he knows English, and he certainly has no narrow prejudice against Englishmen, yet in his touching reminiscence of Lieutenant Gore, in the last *Figaro Illustré*, I find the following passage. He is telling about an evening on board a French ship of war near Rhodes, spent in Gore's society after a separation.

Blank Verse.

The Heroic Couplet.

The Spenserian Stanza.

Jurien de la Gravière.

"La soirée passa comme un songe. Un seul orage faillit la troubler. *Je soutenais que la langue anglaise était rude, complètement dépourvue d'harmonie.* 'Elle est

Anecdote of Lieutenant Gore.

rude pour vous, qui ne savez pas la prononcer,' ripostait l'insulaire avec véhémence."

Here we have first the impression of the uneducated French ear, then the truth about the matter from the Englishman. Another Frenchman (whose name is not worth mentioning in connection with that of M. Jurien de la Gravière) says that the English language is scarcely intelligible when spoken, even for the English themselves, and that is why they are so taciturn. Another calls English "*cet idiome sourd.*" How are these Frenchmen to appreciate the "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies"?—how are their ears to hear the "God-gifted organ-voice of England"?

French Opinion on different English Writers.

What really happens is this. English authors are known in France by translations, and as neither the music of verse nor the style of prose can be reproduced in a translation, the author is judged by a criterion outside of his literary workmanship. His reputation is constructed over again, without reference to his mastery of language, on the grounds of thought or invention only. Herbert Spencer has a great reputation in France as a thinker, Dickens as an inventor. Thackeray is very little appreciated, because the French can never know how superior he was in style to Dickens. Of English writers on art, Sir Joshua Reynolds is appreciated in France because his doctrine contained nothing particularly English, and his style was simple and clear; Ruskin has no French readers because his views on art are English and his style complex, elaborate, ornate. The name of Byron is known to every educated Frenchman, that of Tennyson is known to students of English literature only.

The Philosophers.

All the chief English and Scotch philosophers are

familiar to French students of philosophy, and in fact accepted by them as their great teachers and guides, but they are utterly unknown to the French public.

Independently of literary merit, foreign literatures are sometimes called upon to supply an element of human interest that is wanting in the home productions. The French are aware that Russian novels are not so well constructed as their own, yet there is a poignancy, a profundity of feeling, and a strength of primitive barbaric nature in the Russian novel that are wanting in the French, and this has given the foreign novelist a great success even through translations. The desire for *more nature* always brings on a reaction against any conventionalism, and the foreigner who brings more nature has his assured success. A modern English conventionalism, quite unknown to our forefathers, forbids the complete portraiture of men and women in fiction. This has created a desire to see another side of life, and the French novelist supplies the want. The English want immoral literature and buy French novels; the French want moral literature and buy English novels—in translations. It would be better, perhaps, to have for both countries a kind of fiction that should be simply truthful, rather than the English novel that makes life better than it is and the French that makes it worse.

Russian Novels in France.

More Nature.

Demand and Supply.

It has been erroneously affirmed that painting is cosmopolitan because the fame of certain artists is universal. That of others is purely national. There may be national elements in painting repulsive to other national elements in the mind of a foreigner. If the reader could have before him all the French criticisms of English art that I have read, or all the French allusions to it, nothing

Painting not Cosmopolitan.

French Resistance to English Art.

would strike him so much in them as the attitude of stubborn resistance in the French mind to English artistic influences. Such notices bristle all over with antagonism. It is not simply that the French usually consider the English bad artists, they resent the attempt of England to enter the domain of art as if it were an unwarrantable intrusion, or a ridiculous attempt to do something for which Englishmen were never qualified by nature. As *Punch* looks upon a Frenchman trying to play cricket or venturing on horseback after English foxhounds, even so the French critic looks upon the misguided Englishman who attempts to paint a picture or carve a statue.

French Estimates of English Painters.

In a volume of French art criticism on my table I find two or three allusions to English painters, to Reynolds, "who imitated everybody," and to Turner, "the copyist of Claude." The latest French critic of London says that in the National Gallery, with the exception of some portraits by Gainsborough and some dogs by Landseer, there are no English pictures to detain a visitor. No French Government has ever yet dared to purchase an English picture for one of the French galleries.

M. Chesneau.

M. Chesneau says that a French collector would never think of having one in his house otherwise than as a curiosity. He would not have it "comme une satisfaction esthétique, encore moins comme un motif d'élévation offert à son âme."

*L'Art.*

The one great and honourable exception to this narrowness has been the illustrated art journal *l'Art*, which has certainly done all in its power to overcome the narrowness of French prejudice against English painting, but *l'Art* is not a purely French enterprise. One of its editors is a Belgian who speaks English and visits England very frequently.

Opinions of French Artists.

The most cultivated French artists are not insensible to the qualities of English art. Those who know Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilkie, Turner, Constable, see that there are some interesting qualities in their works. Flaxman, too, has considerable reputation in France through his designs in illustration of Homer. English engravings after Landseer have been bought in France rather extensively by lovers of animals, and *la vignette anglaise*, such as the vignettes after Turner, has long been esteemed as rather a favourable example of the pretty in art as distinguished from what is serious and elevated.

Constable in France.

Constable alone, of all English artists, has had a practical effect in France. For readers unacquainted with the fine arts I may say that two of Constable's pictures, exhibited in Paris during his lifetime, produced such a revolution in French ways of looking at nature that they founded the modern French school of landscape. They were, in fact, much more influential in France than in the painter's native land.

Celebrity of French and English Painters.

With this unique exception, due to French weariness of conventionalism and thirst for freshness at that particular time, there has never been any English force in art comparable, beyond the frontier, to that of the French school which radiates all over the world. The fame of an English painter is insular, that of a Frenchman, of the same relative rank, is planetary. Even the United States of America, bound as they are to England by close ties of language and literature, follow, almost exclusively, French direction in painting. The Americans appear not only to have accepted all French painters who have any celebrity at home, but they have adopted, almost without question, the antagonism of French critics

American Opinion.

towards everything that is English in the fine arts. This is the more remarkable that the inhabitants of the United States certainly look to English opinion in other matters much more than to French. They do not greatly respect or esteem the French, and they *do* certainly respect and esteem the English, in spite of occasional differences.

Influence of French Art in England.

The most signal triumph of French art has not been its influence on the continent of Europe but in England itself, where it has modified the tendencies of the existing school both in choice of subject and in technical execution. Through French influence English painting has been brought nearer to continental painting. At the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 there was not that shock of surprise on passing from foreign sections to the British that seized the spectator in 1855. It is safe to predict that in 1889 the sense of strangeness will have still further diminished.

Absence of Narrowness in England.

The English are not narrow in opposition to French artistic influences. Rosa Bonheur's reputation in England was made quite as easily as if she had been an Englishwoman. The French Gallery in London has extended the fame of many a foreign artist. Meissonier, Gérôme, Edouard Frère, are appreciated in London as in Paris. So it has been with the best French etchers, Méryon, Rajon, Waltner.

C. R. Leslie, R.A., on Continental Art.

Still, there exists or has existed amongst some Englishmen a prejudice against French art. The older Leslie was so patriotic as to believe that before the peace "the British school had possessed the wine and the other schools the water only of art, and that the peace, by mingling these, had strengthened the art of the continent exactly in the

degree in which it had diluted art with us." The French got the wine of art from England and mixed it with their water. Leslie thought too that it would be time enough for the French to talk of "high art" when they produced pictures that would bear even a distant comparison with the works of the great old masters, whereas those of a dozen English painters, *including Fuseli's and the best of Haydon's*, could "hang with credit amongst those of the greatest painters that ever lived." Haydon himself said, "The present French artists have immense knowledge but their taste is bad, they know not how to avail themselves of what they know, how to marshal, order, and direct it." Etty said of the French, "It is lamentable, the narrow nationality of their school; Titian, Correggio, Paolo, Rubens, throw down their pearls in vain. The husks of their own school are preferred." In the five volumes of *Modern Painters*, modern French painters are treated as if they did not exist.

Haydon.

Etty on French Painters.

Italian and Dutch masters had the immense advantage of belonging to nations that excited no political jealousy. If Titian and Correggio belonged to the Italy of to-day, the Italy that has a fleet and an army, and a place in the councils of Europe, they would be judged in the same hostile spirit as the English. In like manner it was an advantage for Italian musical composers, as to their fame in France, that they belonged to feeble principalities. No English musical composer has a chance of recognition in France. When Germany was feeble her music was judged on its own merits; since she became strong it has been found impossible to represent the works of her most recent musical genius on the French stage; and when an attempt was made to do so there was almost an *émeute*,

Advantage to Artists of belonging to weak States.

whilst his talents and even his morals became objects of violent attacks in the French press.

French Patriotic Bias.

The powerful effects of the French patriotic bias have been noticed already by Herbert Spencer. He observed, as examples, that in the picture by Ingres of the "Crowning of Homer" French poets are conspicuous in the foreground, while the figure of Shakespeare in one corner is half in and half out of the picture, and the name of Newton is conspicuous by its absence from those of great men on the string-course of the *Palais de l'Industrie*, though many unfamiliar French names are engraved upon it.

Prejudice diminishes with the Dignity of the Work.

The intensity of these prejudices always diminishes with the dignity of the work to be judged. As the French admit the superior quality of English varnishes for carriages (their coach-builders will use no other), so they appreciate English cutlery and broadcloth, they even go so far as to copy English fashions in masculine dress. Most of the agricultural machines employed in France are of British make. The horses that run on French racecourses are of English blood, and English grooms attend to the best French stables. The British, on their side, know the merits of French gloves, silks, and champagne, and the French cook is as much a recognised personage in England as the English groom in France.

It is a mistake in the people of any nation to suppose that by any kind of magnificence and splendour, however artistic it may be, they can exalt their country in the minds of foreigners. The foreigner perceives the attempt to subjugate him, and resents it. There is that gorgeous building, the British Houses of Parliament. I do not wish to laugh at it myself, being one of the few who believe that it has artistic merit, that it is even a kind of

Effect of the Houses of Parliament on Foreigners.

architectural poem intended to glorify the greatness of England. The foreigner, however, does not want the greatness of England to be glorified, and no sooner is he aware of the attempt than he immediately begins to sneer at the building and to belittle it in every way as much as he can. In reality, the House of Lords is a chamber of noble dimensions, all the materials used in it are of the best quality, and the workmanship is thoroughly and unsparingly good. Although the ceiling is decorated, the wainscot is simply of carved oak. Well, one French writer compares the House of Lords to a shop where coloured glasses are sold for a shilling, another says it is as small as the public room of the *mairie* in a French village, a third likens it to a *café concert*, a fourth receives an impression of *ferblanterie*, that is, of tinner's work. These French critics are angry at the costliness and excellence of the sound English work, and do all they can to cheapen it. In the House of Commons the Speaker's chair is compared to an organ in a Dutch beer-house, and the Speaker himself, when adorned with his wig, to an actor in a comic opera. If the French will not venerate the Speaker's wig, what is there on earth that they will venerate?

The House of Lords.

The House of Commons.

There is but one unquestioned and unquestionable superiority in great things—that of a victorious army. And that brings other superiorities with it. Nothing could be more encouraging to the spirit of conquest than the exalted moral eminence which the Germans attained in Europe after Sedan, and the moral degradation of the French when they had been compelled to pay two hundred millions sterling. God had rewarded German virtue with victory and had chastised the wicked Frenchmen for their

A Victorious Army.

Moral Eminence of the Conqueror.

sins. And not only does victory exhibit moral worth, but it glorifies the intelligence of the victorious nation, making all its statesmen wise. Their mistakes are all forgotten; the evidence of their sagacity remains. It is now almost unimaginable that Napoleon III was held to be the profoundest statesman in Europe until he had been beaten in the field. After Sedan there was an immediate discovery of his weakness, dreaminess, ineptitude. All the faults of the beaten army, in all ranks, became suddenly apparent in the same way. During the Crimean war, and the campaign that ended in Solferino, the absence of stiffness in the French soldiers, and the comparatively easy relations between them and their officers, were considered signs of the practical qualities of the French. After Sedan the same characteristics were treated as evidence of a want of discipline.

Napoleon III and his beaten Army.

It is an error to suppose that displays even of military power in time of peace will produce a subjugating effect on the imagination of foreigners. The only utility of them is to make the taxpayers at home believe that they have something for their money. The foreigner carps and sneers. The English made a great naval display at the time of the Queen's jubilee, and there have been English naval manœuvres since. The effect of the review outside of England was to provoke a depreciating analysis of the shipping, by which it was shown that most of the vessels were either badly armed or of an obsolete construction. As to the manœuvres, they demonstrated, to the satisfaction of foreigners, how easily the English coast might be ravaged by a hostile fleet.

Military Displays in Time of Peace.

There is this difference in the present situation of England and France, that whilst the defeat of England

has hitherto, at any rate since the Norman Conquest, been nothing more than a subject of prophecy welcome to the jealousy of other nations, that of France has actually taken place. England is always *to be* humiliated, France really *has been* humiliated. The difference is considerable —it is that which exists between a vase that has been broken and another that might be broken if it were not properly taken care of. And the French have no longer the consolation which cheered them a little after Waterloo, of having yielded to Europe in arms. They have been beaten fairly in a duel with one nation, or at least with one people that became a nation before the war was over, and they have submitted, not willingly, but in fact, to all the consequences of the war. The situation will be equalised whenever a foreign Power shall surround London with an impassable ring of troops and dictate terms of peace in Windsor Castle, holding the English Sovereign as a prisoner in some fortress or palace on the continent.

Difference between England and France.

The English are in a very peculiar state of mind with regard to the possibility of a great national disaster. They have not anything like the blind confidence, the foolish security in ignorance, that the French had before 1870. I well remember how the French in those days looked forward to European wars. They felt as safe as if God Himself had guaranteed the inviolability of their frontier. A war meant sending troops out of the country with affectionate kisses and hand-shakings, and receiving them with the honours due to a victorious army on their return. The present English temper resembles that kind of anxiety which troubles people in private life when their money matters are not satisfactory or they have a painless

Former French Confidence.

Present English Anxiety.

but incurable disease. The anxiety comes on at odd times, one cannot say when or why, and occupies the mind for a while. Then, as no real remedy presents itself, the anxiety is thrust aside and forgotten as much as possible, till it becomes importunate in the same accidental way again. The common English people alternate between times of false security, or forgetfulness, and panics, the intelligent English know always that the situation is precarious, and do what they can to remedy it, regretting that they can do so little.

The Common and the Intelligent English.

It is useless to argue about success in literature with people too uneducated to read English. It is useless to affirm the greatness of English art, for that can be systematically denied. There is but one kind of greatness that need give England a thought or a care in reference to foreign countries, and that is her power of offence and defence by sea and land. The only unanswerable superiority is superiority in arms. Commercial and colonial greatness is but the filling of the sponge; a victorious enemy would squeeze it. If ever the day should unhappily come when an enemy clutches England by the throat as Germany held France in 1871, he will make her sign away the Colonies, and India too, and Malta, and Gibraltar, as France made "proud Austria" sign away Lombardy and Venice, and as France herself signed away Alsatia and Lorraine. Commercial prosperity, at such a time, is as vain as poetry and painting, or that insular music that French ears will not listen to. It is useless as a showman's profits when his skull is cracking between the lion's jaws.

The only unanswerable Superiority.

What a victorious Enemy would do.

# PART IX

## VARIETY

# CHAPTER I

## VARIETY IN BRITAIN

EUROPEAN travellers in the more benighted parts of Asia, such, for example, as the interior of Arabia, have sometimes had to contend with a peculiar difficulty in making their nationality clear. The ignorant Orientals class all Europeans together as one nation. Mr. Palgrave even found, in his Eastern travels, that the people imagine all Europeans to be citizens of one. town. "Europe they know to be Christian, but they conceive it to be one town, neither more nor less, within whose mural circuit its seven kings—for that is the precise number, count them how you please—are shut up in a species of royal cage to deliberate on mutual peace or war, alliance or treaty, though always by permission and under the orders of the Sultan of Constantinople." These ideas, it may be supposed, could exist only in the most unenlightened regions of central Arabia, where the European traveller hardly ever penetrates. Not so. Mr. Palgrave tells us that this admirable geographical and political lesson was inculcated on him "not once, but twenty times or more, at Homs, Bagdad, Mosool, and even Damascus." In central Arabia ignorance about foreigners went a little further, as might be expected from

Europe one Town for Orientals.

the ignorance of that part of the world. There he was often asked, with the utmost seriousness, "whether any Christians or other infidels yet existed in the world."

English and French one People.

This is an extreme case, but we find in the writings of other travellers the statement of a natural difficulty in distinguishing English from French, for example. English and French are men of the same nation; they have the same character, the same habits, the same faults, and when one of the two peoples has committed some injustice, the other is held responsible for it.

No Variety across the Channel.

In England and France a sharper distinction is established. In both these countries it is clearly understood that the English are people of one nationality and the French of another. When, however, we pass from the nations considered only as two great masses, and try to find what each knows of the other in detail, we discover the existence of a quiet conviction that there is no variety in the human species on the opposite side of the Channel. Each nation is well aware that there is now, and always has been in past times, an infinite variety of character within its own borders, but it fails to imagine that a like variety can exist in a foreign country. Not only is this inability common amongst those who have travelled little and read little; it may also be found in writers of eminence, who frequently fall into the error of describing the inhabitants of a foreign country as if they were all alike, especially when the description is intended to be unfavourable.

Causes of Internal Difference.

I propose to point out a few of the chief causes of internal difference which act both in England and France. The first and most obvious is that neither of the two nations is homogeneous. They are formed by the joining

together of old nations, they have not grown as single nations from the first.

The power which acts politically in Europe, and which is called *l'Angleterre* or *la Grande Bretagne* in diplomatic correspondence, is composed of four distinct nationalities. If we take one of these, the most northerly, we find that it is inhabited by two distinct races, the Highlanders and Lowlanders. They are spoken of equally as Scotch, yet the difference is not less marked, in reality, than if they were separate nations. The Highlanders still retain, or did retain when I knew them, many of the characteristics of a social state from which the Lowlanders have long since emerged. They were noble rather than industrial in their tastes and instincts, disposed for field sports rather than for the improvement of their condition by labour. Dr. Macculloch's description of their inertia at the beginning of the century was still applicable. The people did not move, of themselves, towards a better condition; they had not the spirit of improvement. They were surrounded, it is true, by natural circumstances of some difficulty, especially those caused by the severity of their climate, but they were far from making the most of such opportunities as they possessed. For example, in gardening, they did not grow, and they could not be induced to grow, the vegetables which the climate allows, even although the want of them brought on scurvy. Their habitations were wanting in every comfort, being almost in the lowest stage of cottage-building, irregular walls of rude stone, with a small hole (glazed, however) for a window, and a low thatch, the fire very commonly on the floor, and the peat reek escaping through an opening in the roof. There was no spirit of enterprise to improve

*La Grande Bretagne.*

The Scotch Highlanders.

Their Inertia.

Lack of Enterprise.

the ground about the habitations, or to make communication easier when the public road (itself due to English military energy) did not happen to be close at hand. In a word, there was nothing of that fruitful discontent which leads the advancing races to incessant improvements. Without the neighbourhood of the Lowland Scotch and the visits of the English, the Highlanders would certainly have remained in a very early stage of civilisation. That early stage has its qualities and merits. The Highlanders have good manners. Poor or rich, they are naturally gentlemen, and they show a fine endurance of hardship which, from the stoic and heroic side, is evidently superior to the love of luxury that develops itself so wonderfully in the South.

Highlanders naturally Gentlemen.

Absence of the Fine Arts in the Highlands.

The Highlanders have, of themselves, no fine arts. Their degree of civilisation has developed no ecclesiastical architecture; they got no further than the building of a few rude small castles. They have not any graphic arts, and in those industrial products which are akin to art they have never got beyond the design of a brooch or the arrangement of the crossing stripes in a plaid. Their vernacular literature consists of little more than a few poems, said to be touching and pathetic in their simplicity. The one literary success in connection with the Highlands has been Macpherson's *Ossian.*

Poverty of Highland Literature.

The Lowlanders.

Now, on all these points, let us compare the Lowlanders. We see at once that the difference of race is accompanied by a difference of aptitudes and of traditions. Good manners are not inbred in them, though they are acquired in the superior classes as a part of culture. In the lower classes there is a sluggish indisposition to be polite, a sort of repugnance to polish of

Repugnance to Polish.

manner as if it were an unmanly dandyism, a feeling that answers to a plain man's dislike to jewellery and fine clothes. Even in religion the difference is discernible. It is true that the Highlanders are not Roman Catholics like the Irish, but they have little of the Protestant Pharisaism which is common in the Lowlands. If a map of Scotland were shaded in proportion to the malignity of Sabbatarianism, the darkest places would not be far north of the Clyde, nor west of the Kyles of Bute.

Sabbatarianism.

The Lowlanders are intensely industrious and of a very constructive genius. They have made the Clyde navigable up to Glasgow, they are bridging over the Forth and the Tay, they build great manufacturing towns, and are famous for all kinds of shipping. On the side of intellect and art we all know what they have done. In proportion to their small numbers, they are the most distinguished little people since the days of the ancient Athenians, and the most educated of the modern races. All the industrial arts are at home in Glasgow, all the fine arts in Edinburgh, and as for literature, it is everywhere. The contrast with Highland indolence, apathy, and neglect, could scarcely be stronger if London itself were transported to the banks of the Clyde. Yet a Frenchman lumps together Highlanders and Lowlanders and calls them "*les Écossais*," and thinks that they all wear the tartan and the kilt. It is true that he knows little else about them except that their beautiful Queen was beheaded, and that "*en Écosse l'hospitalité se donne.*"

Industrial Triumphs of the Lowlanders.

Their Intellectual Distinction.

Fine Arts at Edinburgh.

French Ideas about Scotland.

There is a greater difference, in the essentials of civilisation, between the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland than there is between the Lowlands and the county of Lancaster.

Lancashire.

Lancashire has so strong a character of its own that it may almost be considered a nation. The accident by which it is a Royal Duchy, as Wales is a Principality, may be an additional excuse for considering Lancashire, for the present, as a little nation within its own frontiers. It is fairly comparable in wealth and population, not only to the Lowlands but to the entire Kingdom of Scotland. The population of Lancashire in 1881 was to that of Scotland as thirty-four to thirty-seven, and to that of Switzerland as thirty-four to twenty-eight, in round numbers.

Population of Lancashire.

All the characteristics that mark southern Scotchmen reappear in Lancashire, whilst those characteristics that belong especially to the Highlands are absent from Lancashire. The Lancastrians, like the Lowland Scotch, are a most energetic race, that would never rest contented with a low degree of material civilisation,—a race with a remarkable genius for industry and trade, having a great love of comfort, and yet at the same time a remarkable willingness to sacrifice personal ease for the attainment of greater wealth. I suppose there are more rich men in Lancashire with resolution enough to get up at five o'clock on a winter's morning than in all the rest of England. Again, although Lancashire has not produced authors and artists of such fame as the greatest that have illustrated Scotland, it has given warm encouragement to literature and the fine arts, especially to modern painting. If you pass to the comparison of religion and manners, you find manners independent and often rude, as amongst the Lowlanders, and religion inclining to the severer forms of Protestantism, with a marked Sabbatarian tendency. I visited London once

Lancastrian Characteristics.

Energy.

Encouragement of Literature and Art.

Protestantism in Lancashire.

with a friend from Lancashire, who was truly representative of the county, which he had hardly ever quitted, and I well remember that he was quite as much put out by the London Sunday as a Scottish Lowlander could have been.

Some light may be thrown on these similarities by the recollection that the western Lowlands of Scotland and Lancashire are parts of old Strathclyde, so that the inhabitants may have an ethnological affinity, like the descendants of the true ancient Scots, who equally inhabited the West Highlands and the north of Ireland. Again, the Roman occupation of Britain included the north of England and the Lowlands of Scotland up to the firths of Clyde and Forth, so that the men of Lancashire and the Lowlands had the benefit of the same Roman example, whilst the Highlanders were left to develop a social state of their own. In later times Lancashire and the south of Scotland were equally open to the influences of European civilisation, whilst the Highlands remained completely outside of it, like the interior of Arabia today.

Old Strathclyde.

The Roman Example.

European Influences.

If Lancashire has many of the characteristics of an independent nation, is there no other part of England which in recent times has developed characteristics of its own? Yes, there is the great nation of London, more populous than Scotland, Holland, or Switzerland, and destined to surpass Belgium in population before the end of the century. In London the English character has certainly undergone a great and astonishing modification. London is geographically in England, but intellectually one can only say that it is in the world. A provincial coming to London has not quitted the island, yet other-

The Nation of London.

A Provincial in London.

wise he hardly knows where he is. At first he does not belong to the place at all; after some experience of it he finds out whether he belongs to London naturally or not —that is to say, whether there is the degree of adaptability in him which may enable him to breathe the open intellectual atmosphere of the place. Physically, London may be as big as Loch Lomond; socially and intellectually, it is larger than Russia, and may well form, not only a county by itself, but a state within the State. I have said that in London the English character has undergone a modification. It has become more open, more tolerant, better able to understand variety of opinion, and much more ready to appreciate talent and welcome thought of all kinds. The nation of London is essentially modern and democratic, not caring who your grandmother may have been if only you yourself are to its taste; but at the same time it does not desire to be a coarse and uneducated democracy; it values culture and taste far too highly to sacrifice them to a low equality. In a word, London clings to its own standard of civilisation. If you come up to that standard, if you have refinement and just money enough for housekeeping of unpretending elegance, you may be an infidel and a radical, yet London will not disown you, London will not cast you out into the cold.

London a State within the State.

London a Democracy.

Its Standard of Civilisation.

London not Insular.

Although London happens by chance to be situated on an island it is not insular. The nation of London is of all nations the most cosmopolitan, the most alive to what is passing everywhere upon the earth. It seems there as if one were not living so much the life of a nation as the world's life. You speak of some outlandish place at a London dinner-table, and are never surprised

if somebody present quietly gives a description of it from personal knowledge. There are more people in London who have travelled and are ready to start on travels than in any other place on the whole earth. It is there that all the ocean telegraphs converge and steamers are arriving daily from all parts of the world. Switzerland is London's playground, Cannes and Nice are its winter garden, and so comprehensive do our ideas become in London that those places seem actually nearer to us there than they do in the heart of France.

Number of Travellers in London.

The railway system is having the effect of making all the English aristocracy Londoners. I am old enough to remember the time when there were still provincial people of rank in the north who spoke sound northern English, not dialect, but English with vowels and consonants, including the letter *r*. Their successors talk the half-articulate London language. It is said that some young Highland chieftains of the present day speak southern English only too beautifully.

Effects of the Railway System.

Still, the national differences remain deep seated in the people and show no sign of losing their ancient strength. The Irish may become friendly fellow-subjects, but they will not be Anglicised. Neither will the Scotch be Anglicised, nor the Welsh. The present tendency is to accentuate nationality, not in hostility to England, but from the sentiment of a special patriotism. This is most significant, for hostility to England might pass away, but special patriotism is not likely to pass away.

National Differences.

Irish. Scotch. Welsh.

In addition to these causes of variety there must ever remain the infinite differences of individual character. Shakespeare lived only in the English midlands, then

Variety of Individual Character.

Shakespeare.

scantily populated, and in the little London of his time. He had not travelled abroad, nor learned Italian,[1] nor talked like Milton with the *literati* of the Continent; he had not, like Spenser, lived in the north of England and in Ireland; yet the diversities of character in his plays are as numerous as the *dramatis personæ*. Scott lived at the northern end of the island, in or near a minor capital city; he could speak no foreign tongue,[2] he knew England and London only by brief occasional visits, and hardly anything of the Continent, yet his novels abound in a variety like that of Shakespeare. These writers got their knowledge of human nature from the variety visible around them. Imagine, then, what must be the presumptuous *outrecuidance* of the Frenchman who thinks that all the inhabitants of Great Britain have one character, and that he—the Frenchman—has got to the bottom of it, and can describe it, and tell his countrymen all about it, though he knows neither the land, nor the language, nor the people!

Scott.

Besides the denial of any æsthetic quality to English art, we find in French critics a peculiar disposition to describe it as being all alike. Eminent English artists (Reynolds, Gainsborough, De Wint, Müller, Cox, and many others) have preferred breadth to detail, yet French critics delight in representing the English painter as studying nature with an opera-glass, and representing all details with a wearisome and unnatural minuteness.

[1] The French in Shakespeare has been said (never by French critics) to prove that he knew the language. It proves just the contrary.

[2] Lady Scott was of French extraction, yet Scott could not speak French.

Patriotic hostility, in art criticism as in the criticism of character, closes the eyes to variety.

There used to be a ridiculous monument of the Duke of Wellington on Constitution Hill, and now there is a very noble one by Alfred Stevens in St. Paul's. The same terms of utter contempt were applied by a French critic to the work of the man of genius that Frenchmen formerly applied to the monstrosity. He could not endure any kind of monument to Wellington.

## CHAPTER II

### VARIETY IN FRANCE

THE *Rue de Rivoli*, the *Champs Elysées*, and the *Boulevard des Italiens* are familiar to the travelling English, but they know little of provincial France, and they reciprocate, in a great degree, the French indifference about provincial England. Both nations prefer travelling in Switzerland and Italy to visiting each other. This encourages the notion of uniformity which would be greatly modified by a more detailed acquaintance with the provinces.

Physical Geography.

The variety in the physical geography of France, and in the climate, would be enough already to lead one to expect a corresponding variety in human characteristics. We find in the British Islands that the mountaineers are unlike the inhabitants of the plains, that the people of the north, whose climate is severe, are in some respects unlike those of the south, whose climate is milder, that the maritime population differs from the inland population and the manufacturing from the agricultural. The Englishman is familiar with these contrasts in his own country, yet instead of expecting them in France he supposes French people to be all alike.

Effects on Population.

The Size of France.

The mere size of France might lead one to expect diversity. It is about three times the size of Great Britain, so that the distances in France are greater and the parts

of the population more separated. It is not the custom in England to think of France as a mountainous country, because English impressions of it are chiefly derived from railway journeys across the French Lowlands. I may therefore remind the reader that the French Highlands cover an area equal to the whole of Great Britain, that they include fifty peaks above eleven thousand feet, and a much greater number higher than Ben Nevis, a dozen of them in the department of the Ardèche alone. On the other hand, the French plains are so vast that they include the area of three Irelands. Here is evidently one great cause of variety in the conditions of human life, but France has also nearly two thousand miles of sea-coast, with two very distinct maritime populations, one brought up on the shore of the Channel and the Atlantic Ocean, subject to the same influences as those on the English and Irish coasts, the other by the tideless Mediterranean, under the same influences as the sailors and fishermen of Genoa. Now, with regard to climates, French meteorologists tell us that there are seven distinct climates in France. The most northerly differs little from that of the south of England, whilst the most southerly is Spanish towards the west and, to the east, Italian. You may write a list of French towns, Paris, Tours, Lorient, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, each of which has a climate perfectly distinct from every one of the others. I believe it is not an exaggeration to say that all these towns differ from each other as much as Amiens does from London, for example, and in some cases the difference is much greater. The difference between Marseilles and Lorient is greater than that between London and Inverness.

The French Highlands.

French Coasts.

Atlantic.

Mediterranean.

Varieties of French Climate.

Brittany and Provence.

It would be difficult to imagine two modern nations more different from each other, both in country and people, than are Brittany and Provence. Brittany has a rainy, temperate climate with sea-breezes; Provence, a fierce dry heat, with almost perpetual sunshine and very strong and lasting continental winds. Brittany is the land of the apple-tree, Provence the land of the olive. The shores of Brittany are washed by the tides of the Atlantic, those of Provence by the waves of the tideless Mediterranean. It is like comparing Wales with Italy and the Welsh with the Italians. The Bretons have their ancient language still, the Provençaux retain their beautiful soft modulated Latin, one of the most exquisitely perfect instruments for poetry in the world. The Bretons preserve their costumes; their ways of living, their temper, their ideas, are all different from those of Provence.

Diversity in Neighbourhood.

The great distance between north-western and south-eastern France may lead us to expect wide differences. The variety that exists in great nations is still more striking when we observe the trenchant differences that often divide populations which, geographically, are near neighbours.

The Morvan.

The Morvan is a district about fifty miles from north to south by thirty from east to west. It is not marked on the maps of France, but the reader will understand its situation when I tell him that it embraces portions of four departments: the Yonne to the north, the Côte d'Or to the east, the Nièvre to the west, and Saône-et-Loire to the south. In shape it resembles the Isle of Man, but it includes about five times as much territory. Autun is just outside of it to the south-east, and Avallon just inside it to the north. This district, or

region, is marked by a peculiar physical character. It is a land of hills (not mountains), woods, and running streams, and the inhabitants, until their country was opened by good roads, were scarcely less a people apart than the Bretons. They have a language of their own, which, though akin to French, is not French, and the people are now for the most part able to speak French or Morvandeau at will (just as in the Highlands of Scotland they speak English or Gaelic), and their French is remarkably pure. Les Morvandeaux.

Now, if you compare the people of the Morvan with those of the plain of Burgundy and the Saône, which is quite near, you find the most striking differences. First there is a difference of race and of physical constitution, the Morvan race being the smaller of the two, the women more frequently pretty and well made on their small scale, with a predominance of dark hair and eyes, and a rich rather than a fair complexion. Besides this, there is a great disparity in material civilisation. The art of cookery has been accounted one of the most effectual tests of human advancement; when the people are clever cooks they are usually, it is said, clever in other arts besides, and they set a value on civilised life generally, and will be at great pains to maintain it. Such an art as cookery may have nothing to do with the intellectual side of life, and the Muse may exist on a little oatmeal, though she generally does her work better on a more varied and more interesting diet; but cookery is of great economic importance, because a cooking people will appreciate all the alimentary gifts of Nature and master the arts that procure them, whilst the non-cooking races are negligent and careless providers. The French The Morvan Race. Material Civilisation.

are reputed to be a cooking race, but the Morvan people scarcely understand cookery better than the Scottish Highlanders. Servants from the Morvan are often sharp and active, honest, willing, laborious, cheerful, contented, amiable, yet with all these fine qualities invariably unable to cook a dinner. In the Burgundy wine district and the plain of the Saône a talent for cookery is very common in both sexes, and there are plain unpretending wives of small inn-keepers or wine-growers who would be perfectly capable of serving a royal feast, and not in the least disconcerted by the undertaking. All the Saône bargemen are said to be clever cooks, and they live extremely well. In the Morvan the peasants live with severe self-denial, chiefly on potatoes and thin soup flavoured with a morsel of bacon. Their drink is often a poor kind of perry or cider; they indulge in wine on market-days and sometimes sparingly at home, but then it is of a meagre quality.

Cookery in Burgundy.

Near the Saône the people are a gardening as well as a cooking race; the Morvan people are not gardeners; a rich man may have a garden as a matter of luxury, but the peasants do not cultivate vegetables or fruit-trees. In some parts of the Morvan the spring comes six weeks later than at Chalon on the Saône.

Gardening.

Lastly, in the Morvan there are no fine arts. There may be occasional artistic genius, like that of Gautherin, the sculptor, who began life as a poor Morvandeau shepherd boy, but such gifts find no natural development in the district. The Burgundy wine country, on the other hand, has always been favourable to art of all kinds, and to learning. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and all kinds of scholarship have flourished at Dijon in an association (perhaps not altogether

The Fine Arts.

accidental) with good cookery and the richest of all French vintages.

I have dwelt somewhat disproportionately on this contrast, because I know the country well. It is offered to the reader merely as one example out of many. I am told by those who know other parts of France familiarly that contrasts equivalent to this are to be found in various other regions and districts of that extensive country. There are three ways of dividing France, into departments, provinces, and districts. The departments, although taking their names from physical geography, as a help to the memory for locality, are in reality nothing more than artificial divisions for administrative convenience. The provinces (Burgundy, Normandy, Guienne, etc.) are convenient in another way, because of their connection with history, and also because it is believed still that the population of each province has a character of its own. Districts, though without any definite political or historical character, and often with rather vaguely defined limits, are useful in fixing local characteristics in the mind. Only local antiquaries could enlighten us about their obscure history; but one thing is always noticeable about them which is that the characteristics of each district are of a special nature. For example, the Morvan is a land of hills, woods, and streams; the Sologne is a woody plain, perfectly flat and interspersed with sandy pools and marshes; Les Dombes are an insalubrious region, full of fish-ponds; and Rouergue (in Guienne) is a land of hills and streams, like the Morvan, but with greater altitudes and wilder scenery. The population of each of these districts takes a certain character from the nature of its surroundings and from

Departments.

Provinces.

Districts.

Local Climates.

the local climate, which in one place may be dry, in another rainy, in one very equable and mild, in another extreme in heat and cold. Even within a distance of fifteen or twenty miles you discover, from the meteorological registers kept by the road surveyors, that twice as much rain falls in one village as in another. You have the wet and woody regions, the arid, hot, rocky regions, the lands of pasture and meadow, the vine lands, the country of extinct volcanoes, the peat morasses, the unprofitable sand countries by the sea where only the maritime pine can resist the invasion of sterility.

The Spirit of Towns.

Then there is the spirit of towns; each town has a certain individuality, each has a spirit of its own derived from its historic past, and from its occupations in the present. One town may be a clerical and aristocratic little centre, where a republican (even under the Republic) has not the faintest chance of getting into society; a place where all public functionaries under the Government are socially boycotted; a place where all modern ideas are quietly ignored or despised, where reputations have no currency, and nothing is valued but conformity to a narrow local standard of the *comme il faut*. Thirty miles away, there is, perhaps, a busy commercial town, where all ideas are centred upon a pecuniary success, and people are esteemed exactly in proportion to their capital without regard to other considerations,—a town where all the fortunes are recent, and all have been acquired in trade.

An Aristocratic Centre.

A Commercial Town.

Another variety, very little understood out of France, is that of extremes meeting in the same town. This is sometimes especially striking in the southern towns, and it may be of very long standing, like the conflict between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism at Nîmes, a city

Extremes in the same Place.

Nîmes.

that cannot be correctly described as either Protestant or Catholic; and yet there is more of each religion in it than there would be if the rival faith were extirpated. But the best example in France of a city combining the most opposite characteristics is Lyons. It is at the same time most republican and most clerical. "There is one town above all," wrote Michelet, "where the antagonism of two ages, of the spirit of old times and the new spirit, strikes even the eyes in all its grandeur—that town is Lyons. . . . I leaned on the parapet on the steep of Fourvières, and said to myself, as I looked upon the opposite hill, gloomy, black below, under the cypresses of the Jardin des Plantes, colossal above in its piles of work-people's houses, ten or fifteen storeys high, —I said, *These are not two hills; they are two religions.* The two towns of Lyons, that of the convents and that of the workshops, are the goals of pilgrimage for the poor. Some of them come to the Lyons of miracles and seek charity; these come to Fourvières.[1] But thou, good workman, wilt come to the hill of labour, the serious Croix Rousse. The part in the banquet which thou desirest is bread won by thine own hands." I was reminded of these words of Michelet when, at Lyons, I said to a mechanic who was working on Sunday, "This task prevents you from going to mass." The man paused an instant in his labour, looked up at me seriously, and answered, "It is not my custom to go to mass. He who works prays." He then resumed his prayer with hearty strokes of a hammer.

Lyons.

Michelet's Description

[1] The place on the steep on the right bank of the Saône, behind the cathedral. Since Michelet wrote, a gorgeous new church has been built there for the miracle-working Virgin.

The Nation of Paris.

As in England, London is a kind of nation in itself, so in France we have the nation of Paris. The word is so little of an exaggeration that Paris has often, on the most momentous occasions, acted quite independently of the country, and did actually proclaim its right to autonomy under the Commune, whilst the constant effort of the municipal council ever since has been to erect itself into a parliament at the Hôtel de Ville, and have its own way in spite of the assemblies at the Palais Bourbon or the Luxembourg.

Character of Paris Local.

The Parisian nation has not the same characteristics as the nation of Londoners. The distinguishing character of London is to be, not local, but world-wide; the character of Paris is to be as local as ancient Athens, and as contemptuous of all that lies outside. It is commonly believed that Paris is France, but how can it be France when it is so utterly unlike the provinces? This error comes from the foreigners' habit of staying in Paris only, so that Paris is very really and truly all France to them, being the only France they know. Yet the character of the French capital, so far from being representative, is all its own.

Paris Artistic.

France is not, generally speaking, an artistic country. In the provinces few care for art or know anything about it, whereas Paris is the most artistic city in Europe; and that not simply as the place where pictures and statues are produced in the greatest numbers, and architects find most employment, but as the place where art sentiment is most generally developed, so that it runs over into a thousand minor channels, till the life of the capital is saturated with it.

France is not, generally speaking, an intellectual

country. The people are quick in small things, and they are very intelligent up to a certain point, but life in the French provinces is far less intellectual than in England or America. Parisians say that provincial French life is absolutely and hopelessly stupid. They may think that sincerely, for such an opinion would only, in their case, be a natural effect of contrast, but it is an exaggeration. Provincial life is not exactly stupid, French people can hardly be that under any circumstances, but it is mentally very small and narrow, owing to the extreme isolation of the few superior intelligences, and the prodigious ignorance by which they are surrounded. Unless tied down to provincial life by property, professions, or kindred, an intellectual Frenchman gravitates naturally to the capital, which in this manner drains the provinces of the best men. It is an exaggeration of French vanity to believe that Paris is the light of the world, but it is really the light of France. The provincials believe themselves to be more moral and more serious than the Parisians, but they admit that provincial life is dull without making any effort to enliven it, and the clever provincial speaks of Paris as that paradise from which he is an exile. Notwithstanding their apparent levity, I am told by all who are competent to form an opinion, that the Parisians study better than the provincials. The ordinary level attained in all studies is much higher in Paris than in the provincial cities. The Parisians are the most laborious and best disciplined art students in Europe. In the French University the best professors are reserved for Paris, or promoted to the capital in course of time, and they all say that the boys work better there than in the provinces.

French Provincial Life.

Intellectual Paris.

Level of Studies in Paris.

The difference between the Parisian and the provincial mind is shown in nothing more conspicuously than in its different estimates of human superiority. In Paris the question is what you are, in the provinces what your family is, or what you possess. Reputation in literature, art, or science, is relatively more valuable in Paris than it is even in London, though it is very valuable there; in the French provinces it counts for nothing, or next to nothing. Many Parisian reputations never reach the provinces. The provincial habit of respecting the idlest people most, is in itself antagonistic to fame, which is usually the consequence of hard work. Then there is the indifference, or semi-contempt, towards the pursuits that lead to fame, towards literature, science, and the fine arts. The fame of political celebrities penetrates everywhere like an unpleasant noise—unpleasant, at least, to all but their own following.

Reputation in Paris and the Provinces.

Parisian Manners.

The French temper is not generally very sociable, yet in Paris there is great openness of manner, and a charming readiness to enter into that kind of intercourse which is lightly agreeable without involving much beyond the passing hour. For the free play of the mind, without any pretension to make it more than play, there is no place in the world like Paris. It is a great art or a great gift to make social intercourse bright and truly a relaxation equally removed from pedantry on one side and the dulness of indifference on the other. There is an ease, an apparent simplicity, and a clearness of expression in Parisian talkers that we rarely meet with in provincials, yet these same provincials acquire the Parisian polish after a few years' *frottement* in the capital.

The Moral Contrast.

I have said elsewhere that there is a contrast in the

moral code between Paris and the provinces. Paris now resembles, at least in some degree, the Italy of Byron's day, where illicit *liaisons* were tolerated if there was a certain deference to appearances; provincial France, as a rule, resembles provincial England in the severity of public opinion.

Aristocracy in Paris and the Provinces.

Aristocracy is of immense weight in the French provinces, even when accompanied by very little wealth; in Paris it counts for nothing unless accompanied by great wealth. Like London, Paris is democratic, and takes each man for what he *is* (famous, rich, talented, witty), without inquiring what his ancestors were.

Contrasts of Individual Character.

Besides these local differences there remain in France as in England all the contrasts and varieties of individual character. Some of these varieties are known in England through the historians and novelists, but many more are totally unknown there. It is useless for me to refer to them in an English book without elaborate descriptions for which there is no space in this volume. I need only say that as the Frenchman's Englishman is not an exact representative of all Englishmen taken individually, so it is with that curious ideal type that may be called the Englishman's Frenchman. In my own limited experience I have known a certain number of French people of whom English writers would say, if I described them accurately and elaborately in a work of fiction, that they had not a single French characteristic, and the less the English critics knew of France the more positive they would be. So, if you were to describe a talkative and genial Englishman, such as G. H. Lewes, for example, French readers who had never been in England would tell you that he was not English, that they knew better,

The Englishman's Frenchman.

French Notions of English Character.

that the real Englishman is stiff, grave, proud, awkward, and reserved, so that he can never have the flexibility of mind that Lewes possessed, nor be, like him, an amiable and delightful *causeur*.

Causes that diminish Variety.

Notwithstanding the great variety that still exists in France, certain modern tendencies are steadily diminishing it. The army is silently making the peasantry more national, less local. Railways take people from one province to another, and from all provinces to Paris. Public education is the same for all France. The University is not a local institution, like Oxford or Cambridge, but ubiquitous in the nation, like the Anglican Church in England. Cheap postage and telegrams make the nation itself seem smaller, and Parisian newspapers penetrate everywhere. External habits are now almost the same in all French towns; the hotel system is the same everywhere, the cafés are all alike. Besides this, the French nature is not very tolerant of individuality in character, but tends to reduce it to one dead level of uniformity. "*Être comme tout le monde*" has long been the rule of French civilisation, and there is nothing more contrary to its spirit than to be "singular" or "original."

# EPILOGUE

WHAT is called the "national character" of the French and English has never been fixed, and it is now perceptibly changing.

Changes in English National Character.

The English were at one time not in the least Puritanical. They afterwards became moderately Puritanical in the upper classes and intensely so in the middle classes. They are now slowly but steadily passing out of Puritanism.

The English were at one time more European than insular. After that they became intensely insular, truly a peculiar people. Now, again, they are slowly becoming, chiefly through the influence of London, less insular and more European.

Artistic and Scientific Ideas.

The most powerful agents of change in recent times have been scientific and artistic ideas. These ideas are continuing their work unceasingly, and are even entering into the education of the young. To judge of their importance as new powers we have only to remember that artistic and scientific ideas formerly lay almost entirely outside of aristocratic and middle-class thinking, and were confined to persons specially devoted to artistic or scientific pursuits.

The change may easily be under-estimated. The love of art and science may be called a taste for pictures or a

fancy for shells and minerals, and so made to appear no better than an amusement. In reality, however, the change is most momentous. Science has taught a new way of applying the mind *to everything*. It has affirmed the right and duty of investigation and verification, it has set up a new kind of intellectual morality which has substituted the duty of inquiry for the duty of belief. The immediate result has been, in England, a sudden and amazing diminution of intolerance, a wonderful and wholly unexpected increase of mental freedom. The people of England have now become tolerant to a degree which could have been hoped for by no one who knew the formerly oppressive and aggressive character of religious majorities in that country. The boast of the national poet, that England was a country where men freely said their say, is now losing its apparently ironical aspect and may be true for the coming generation. The bigotry that still remains is only an inheritance of the past, it does not really belong to the present, still less to the more enlightened future.

Extent of Scientific Influence.

Its Result.

The influence of art is less visible than that of science, and seems inferior in this, that art is associated with ideas of pleasure and relaxation in the public mind, though it is more associated with ideas of study and hard work in the minds of artists. However this may be, the influence of art is important in England as one of the forces which are weakening the spirit of Puritanism. Art and Puritanism are antagonistic forces. The true Puritanical spirit always instinctively feels and knows this; for example, it shuts up the National Gallery on Sundays, and would shut up the Louvre if it could.

The Influence of Art.

Art and Puritanism.

Another important influence of the fine arts is in

directing the national mind more to the love and study of nature. Art and nature are not the same, yet art gives a new delight in nature. I am not aware that this goes much beyond a refreshment of the faculties, yet, in an age when men are jaded by over-work and by the peculiar fatigue of life in large towns, a refreshment of this kind may be, and is, more important than in simpler times. One of the modern modifications of English character is that it seeks for natural beauty with a new desire. The modern love of nature is connected with a certain independence of conventionalism, and this is important, because conventionalism includes so much. The Study of Nature.

As the English character is changing in these and other ways, so the French character is changing by its passage from the military to the industrial epoch. It is unfortunate that the enterprise of the Panama Canal seems doomed to failure, because it afforded exactly the outlet that was desirable for French industrial ambition. It was by treating it as a patriotic enterprise and playing upon the patriotic chord that M. de Lesseps attained a delusive appearance of success. The exhibition of 1889, the Eiffel Tower, and the proposed bridge over the Channel, are also proofs of French industrial enterprise on a scale intended to attract attention. The ambition to excel is still in French imaginations, but it is diverted in great part from military to peaceful pursuits. There is no reason why French democracy, which is really averse to war, should not take a legitimate pride in undertakings that require as much science and energy, and almost as much treasure, as the greatest military operations. Changes in the French Character. Modern Industrial Enterprise.

Another change in the French estimate of things is the increasing tendency to apply common sense to Common Sense in Education.

education in spite of old habits and traditions, to discard what cannot be mastered, and to learn more thoroughly what is practically possible and worth learning. The French are also inclined to attach more value to physical exercises. The English have lately become aware of this in consequence of M. Paschal Grousset's very laudable efforts as a journalist in favour of more active amusements in the *lycées;* but the movement began several years earlier, and that writer would not have succeeded as he did without a public opinion already prepared to be favourable. I have shown elsewhere that the French are by no means indisposed to gymnastics and military drill. They are ignorant of cricket, as were the ancient Greeks, certainly not the most inactive people of antiquity.

Desire for Physical Improvement.

The dominant tendencies in the two countries appear to be these. The English are becoming more open-minded and the French are gaining in practical sense and prudence. The English are advancing in religious, and the French in political liberty. Material progress of all kinds is obvious and conspicuous in both.

Dominant Tendencies.

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